

INDIANA PARTNERS FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY AND MISSION

Minutes of November 15, 2011 Servant Board Meeting

The Indiana Partners for Christian Unity and Mission met on November 15, 2011 at the Associated Churches in Fort Wayne, hosted by Roger Reece.

Members Present: Roger Reece, Tina Velthuisen, Fran Frellick, Dennis Frische-Mouri, Terri Johns, Bruce Naylor, and Andrew Sampson

The Christ candle was lit at 10:10 a.m. to start the meeting and Tina opened with two prayers of unity.

The question was asked---**Who are we going to be and what are we doing?** Discussion for the day centered on these questions.

Fran stated that lay people are not so concerned with structures and doctrine, but with working together. The local churches seem more concerned with "what can we do together." IPCUM is trying to be an organization that deals with both issues. But we can't stay who or what we are. Bruce added that if ecumenism is going to be real, it is going to be at a local level. We need to look at ways we can help at the local level, maybe as a funding agent, giving grants for local endeavors. Dennis agreed with Bruce, but that we need some sort of education with that. If we move to funding, what will be the criteria for receiving a grant?

Andrew stated that most of his denomination churches are rural and in small towns, so exposure to working together with other congregations is limited. He also stated that small rural congregations are struggling financially and with low membership, so they are focused inward. It was agreed that there is a real difference between rural and urban churches.

Bruce brought up the idea that if we do grants, we should not exclude interfaith groups as that seems to be the way locals are going.

Fran asked if Lilly might fund education in interfaith/ecumenical programs. Dennis will talk to Chris, who was his stewardship chair at the church he serves in Allisonville and is a vice president at Lilly to see if there are any possibilities.

The consensus at the meeting was that we work on both the giving of grants and the promotion of ecumenism/interfaith at the local level.

Bruce suggested that we consider giving half the grants to rural churches to encourage working together instead of focusing on our three largest cities which already have ecumenical agencies.

The following were the points suggested for a new "vision." 1) focus on local ecumenism/interfaith mission, 2) equipping of the saints for cooperative mission, 3) electronic presence, i.e. Facebook, e-publishing, 4) worship and education together, 5) promote open interfaith/ecumenical conversation, create spaces for those to take place, either electronically or in person, 6) funding these/resourcing ecumenical and interfaith ministry.

Some ideas given for the criteria for awarding a grant would be 1) serves the poor, 2) worship, and 3) exploring faith.

All this would require staff and money to pay staff, but it was agreed that we need to keep that to a minimum.

There is a need to craft a new vision/mission statement, so Tina, Bruce, and Fran worked on that. The following is what they came up with. "The organization, currently known as IPCUM, is re-visioning our mission and purpose for a new day in ecumenical and interfaith relations. Our purpose is to encourage, resource, and fund local ecumenical and interfaith mission efforts. Such missions should include faith conversation and service with our neighbors and might also include common worship as children of God."

The things that need to be considered are 1) funding/finances, 2) constitution and by-laws, 3) staff, 4) promotion efforts, 5) grant criteria, 6) possible expenses, 7) website/Facebook/other.

Regarding funding and assets, Roger called the Fort Wayne Community Foundation during the meeting and found out that we cannot liquidate that money and the only funds we can access are the dividend/interest payments each year.

The meeting broke at 12:00 for lunch with a lunch offering of \$28 going to the Rising Stars program at Associated Churches. The meeting reconvened at 12:30

Terri suggested that we not spend so much time on creating a new mission statement if we won't have funding available. The question was also raised if those present have the authority to do this change. According to the by-laws, a decision can be made by unanimous vote with a 2 week notice period.

The question was also raised about what our name should be or if we would keep the name IPCUM. That decision was tabled till another time.

Dennis will draft a letter by the end of November to be sent to all judicatories and ecumenical agencies, stating our intent and getting feedback. He will e-mail this letter to all servant board and look for our feedback as soon as possible, so the letter can go out right after the first of the year. Then hopefully, we will have responses back for our February meeting. The February meeting would have been our annual meeting and retreat in Tipton, but it was decided to forego that expense and we will meet in South Bend at Tina's church, Holy Trinity, on Tuesday, February 7, 2012 at 10:00.

Each servant board member should give thought to funding, organization of the new group, and how we will define partners and be prepared to discuss at the next meeting. We also are being asked to pray specifically for the future of IPCUM and where God is leading.

After sharing prayer concerns, the meeting was closed with the recitation of the Our Father at 1:45.

Respectfully submitted, Terri Johns, secretary pro tem

NEXT MEETING-----FEBRUARY 7, 2012-----HOLY TRINITY CHURCH, SOUTH BEND