

Westmoreland Congregational United Church of Christ  
Board of Spiritual Formation  
Minutes of Meeting April 3, 2017

Present: Rev. Alexis Kassim, Maryanne Courtney, Yonce Shelton, Jane Williams, Tucker Ball (guest)

Jane opened the meeting at 6:40 p.m. with a 2011 prayer by Mary Ruth Crook. She then updated the group on the status of the **church library**, which awaits a final decision from the Governance Council before weeding and disposal of most of the titles. The period for congregational input brought three comments in favor of closing the library and one opposed. Jane will draft an invitation for Alexis' review, to Joe Alford and Judy Newman, to help decide which titles to keep. It was acknowledged that the intellectual work of weeding the collection differs from the physical work of boxing all books to clear the space and disposing of the titles not to be kept.

Alexis reported that children will stay with parents in the worship service this **Easter**. The youth group will help prepare the Easter eggs on Palm Sunday and then hide them at 9:00 a.m. for the children's egg hunt after the worship service on Easter Sunday.

Alexis also reported a **mission trip** this summer for youth to the General Synod in Baltimore is still a possibility. It may be a Friday-Sunday event.

Westmoreland's summer **Peace Camp** for elementary school children may still need to be a week-long program rather than spread out over the summer. If so, that week will likely be June 19-23 and will need a team of volunteers. Jane will draft a message from BSF to the congregation, to be included in an upcoming Westmoreland e-news, asking parents of their and their children's interest in attending the camp and asking parents if they are able to help. The feedback will help gauge interest for planning purposes.

It was agreed the BSF will continue planning an after-church discussion led by 2-3 panelists, about how they experience and translate **Black Lives Matter** into their daily lives. Betsy Doyle had offered to be a panelist, to talk about her efforts against gun violence and in support of gun control. Jane will be in touch with Alexis to continue the planning.

Tucker Ball joined the group to discuss his and others' ideas for a **monthly alternative worship service**, perhaps on a Saturday or Sunday at 5:00 p.m., in the church but not necessarily the sanctuary. Such a service would be lay-led, less formal, more contemplative and participatory than the Sunday morning worship service. People who decide to participate could help develop the ideas and/or the services themselves. Communion might be served. The group responded very positively to Tucker's ideas and he agreed to draft a summary of what such a service might provide/accomplish/look like, along with some questions for an online survey, the availability of which could be announced April 16. The survey would be open a couple of weeks and then an

before- or after-worship service meeting on May 7 could happen for those interested in developing the alternative service concept.

To recruit **church school teachers** for 2017-18, the BSF had agreed at its March meeting to ask board members to lead recruitment for each class. Betsy and Yonce agreed to lead recruitment for the preschool and the K-2<sup>nd</sup> classes. For the board, Jane will invite Abby Bronson to recruit teachers for the 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>-grade class. Alexis provided an updated roster of potential teachers for each class. She will also provide the recruiters a template for initial e-mail messages to potential teachers.

Alexis reported that the **Ecumenical Advocacy Days** will not be a youth activity *per se*. However, it can still be advertised in the church bulletin and those interested could go as a group.

Maryanne told Alexis how much her daughter and others in the youth group enjoyed their retreat weekend, especially attending worship service at Alfred Street Baptist Church in Alexandria.

**The BSF's May meeting will be May 8.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.