

FAIRFAX COUNTY CHURCHES AND SOCIETY MEETING NOTES (REVISED)

September 24, 2016, Noon - 2:30 p.m.
First Church of Christ, Scientist, Fairfax

Attendees – See page 4.

Purpose of the meeting

- Identify/explore opportunities to collaborate which best ensure the long term active presence of Christian Science in Fairfax County
- “Collaboration” to include anything up to and including a potential merger of 2 or more branches.

Ground Rules/Expectations

- Sharing of ideas meeting
- Membership interest/support not known
- No final decisions will be made

Diana Goshorn gave an over view of the implementation of the Long Range Planning Committee at Fairfax church stating that it stemmed from a church building of 50 years in need of repairs and the approach by the Mennonite church next door to tear down both buildings and build a new building to possibly share. This prompted a survey of our branch church members and regular attendees.

Categories of the survey included the following:

Partnership with Mennonite/Korean and Buddhist to form a legal entity with neighboring religious institutions with space on the ground level that would serve each group’s needs (Christian Science, Mennonite/Korean and Buddhist), while providing living space in the upper stories for area families and parking space in the building on the property. Included in the idea is to give the community at large a beautiful peace garden.

Master Plan – stay at present location with a comprehensive plan to update, refresh and make major architectural changes (bump out front of church) to include additional space for things such as ADA facilities.

Move – Sell the property and temporarily relocate to the Stacy Sherwood Community Center in Fairfax, across from our church, for Wednesday and Sunday services while a new location is found.

Merge - Merge with another Christian Science church either inviting them to join us in our location, joining them at theirs or possibility of joining forces to build a whole new church at a new location.

Maintain – Continue functioning as we have been doing addressing needs on a short-term basis—5-year plan. The needs include an ADA bathroom and accessibility to it, roofing changes, etc.

The result of the survey was there was a three-way tie between Merge, Maintain and Master Plan.

One of the meeting attendees mentioned that there should be a long-term plan for increasing membership.

Reading Rooms

- Lissa Murphy (McLean church) spoke about the ad hoc Reading Room Committee she heads up. The committee started by looking at the location of their own RR that is located on the second floor of a building and not near pedestrian traffic. The idea is to look out and reach out and discuss collaborative efforts with other churches. There have been several meetings to date with area churches based on the premise of working together.
- Mary Baker Eddy said Reading Rooms weren’t for just church members. They are for anyone seeking something new and inspiring.
- Reston church said their RR location is not fine as it gets almost no foot traffic and is on the walkout lower level of their church which is in a residential neighborhood. With respect to the

possible relocation aspect of their members to another church, many do not see Fairfax as a central location for them as several of their members live in Loudoun County.

- One of the biggest issues with RRs in general is the staffing issue.
- Appreciation expressed for Joint Reading Rooms.
- Look for different ways on RRs – greater web presence is one (christiansciencedc.org covers churches in the area)
- Possibility of churches working together to staff a kiosk at Fair Oaks Mall. According to Lissa, kiosk does not have to be open the hours the mall is open.
- Why don't practitioners have offices in RRs? There is a *Manual* based provision that forbids this. The thought behind it is that the practitioner should not be in a RR to recruit patients.
- There are few officers mentioned in the *Manual* – there is ample occupation to keep us all busy. Accept Christ and see healing.

Opportunities for churches working together

- Lecture series – lectures are *Manual* based activity. Springfield church has more than one lecture a year. Their next lecture is December 3rd.
- CSMC has a lot of interest in churches working together
- Christian Science is simple. Healings are not the way we looked at them earlier. Is there a way we can pray together?
- “Progress is the Law of God” - what is the future of CS in Fairfax?
- According to Fairfax church survey results there is willingness by some to sell and move to another location.

Literature Distribution

- McLean church has boxes at the East and West Falls Church metro stations where *Monitors*, *Sentinels* and *Journals* are placed.
- Fairfax church has boxes at the Vienna metro station where same literature as mentioned above is placed.

General comments

- Great to have meetings such as this one to think outside the box.
- Christian Science will embrace all churches.
- Wonderful to have churches talking with one another.
- Our church is based on loving God and neighbors. Cement of a higher humanity will unite all.
- Prayer is an activity (it is action - not just contemplation) – keep thought open. We are safe even though we don't know the destination.
- Prayer and thought move us forward.
- Are churches open to do something different – give up their church building and relocate to a new area?
- Rotating type of Sunday School among churches and society and not necessarily meeting on Sunday mornings.
- Series of lectures among churches is a good idea.
- Reading Rooms in churches willingness to have a rotating day and time for their operations among the churches.
- Christian Scientists worship God, not our building.
- Demographic study by zip codes suggested. There seems to be an idea that we are limited by numbers. How are demographics going to change our idea of Christian Science?
- Christian Scientists as a whole are conservative. We don't like change.

- Suggestion expressed instead of another in person meeting to discuss through email conversation.
- Important to keep lines of communication open with your branch church/society members.

Sense of the meeting participants

It was the sense of the participants that the churches do have many opportunities to collaborate in outreach activities. It was also the sense of those who spoke that, ideally, it made the most sense that there be as many churches as there are members and attendees to support. And further, that these churches should be located so as to be most convenient to the greatest number of current members and attendees, as well as those in the greatest population centers in the county which constitutes our collective future membership.

Next steps

No one disagreed with the following next steps:

1. Report back to our respective Executive Boards and memberships about this meeting
2. Request that each Executive Board send numbers of members, regular attendees, and Sunday School students by zip code to Fairfax clerk to compile and share with the group, with the intention to view in the context of current church/society locations as well as general population centers in Fairfax County.
3. Hold a second meeting of this group at Fairfax church on Nov. 13th to continue this conversation.

Gratitude expressed by all for a good lunch and meeting.

Next meeting – Sunday, November 13, 2016, 2:30 p.m., Fairfax church

Meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m. with the repetition of the 6th Tenet.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Ellen MaGill, Clerk
First Church of Christ, Scientist, Fairfax

ATTENDEES

Arlington

Sue Myers (EB)

Centreville-Clifton

Kathy Fish (EB)

Jagi Wright (EB)

Fairfax

John Baker (LRPC, EB)

Gordon Bennett (LRPC)

Diana Goshorn (LRPC, EB)

Clare Grosgebauer (LRPC)

Stephanie Johnson (LRPC)

Mary Ellen MaGill (Clerk)

Phil Shutler (EB)

McLean

Jill Hamilton (Ad Hoc RR)

Lissa Murphy (Ad Hoc RR)

Maria Eugenia O'Brien

Keith O'Brien (SS Sup)

Barbara Sipe (Clerk)

Reston

Kay Miller (EB, Asst. Clerk)

Nancy Stover

Springfield

Mimsi Janis

Barbara Klementz

Beverly Marshall (Clerk)

Caroline Schlaseman (EB)

Bill Uehling

Elly Uehling