

The post-lunch session was devoted to looking ahead to the committee's priorities for the coming year. We identified five areas of concentration:

1. Israel/Palestine
2. Prison reform
3. Hunger
4. Nuclear warfare and weapons
5. Gun control

A sixth area of interest, the Environment, was put on hold due to the lack of time and resources needed to address this issue.

John suggested that we approach each of these areas of concentration with three foci: Prayer, Study, and Action.

1. **Israel/Palestine:** in discussing this area of concentration, Linda is continuing to work with the CNY Committee for Justice in Palestine. The National EPF also has a well-organized effort through the Palestine Israel Network (PIN). Some areas of Prayer (P), Study (S), and Action (A) for the coming year include:
 - a. PIN will be meeting with Michael in December. (A)
 - b. Continuing communication between the national and local group. (A)
 - c. Bringing materials for letter-writing and email-writing campaigns to our committee meeting and to the parish. (A)
 - d. Praying for peace in conflict areas, including Palestine and Israel. Add these to Prayers for the People. (P)
 - e. Utilizing PIN's study resources, specifically *Steadfast Hope: The Palestinian Quest for Peace*. The committee will go through the study program in the next year and then perhaps will offer it to the congregation in 2017. (S)
 - f. Tangentially related to issues in the Middle East, the committee discussed the possibility of adopting a Syrian refugee family. (A)

2. **Prison reform:** the committee discussed several focal points regarding the issue of prisons, some of which have been focus points in the past, including writing letters to prisoners. It was noted that letter writing to prisoners has dropped off in the last year, both on the part of volunteers and on the part of prisoners (some of whom were interested in communicating with young women). The committee may seek to find a new source of inmate names for the purposes of correspondence. Areas of Prayer (P), Study (S), and Action (A) for the coming year include:
 - a. Revitalize prisoner correspondence, including the possibility of sending birthday and/or holiday cards. Perhaps involve the St. John's Congregation in the latter. (A)
 - b. Continue lobbying efforts around solitary confinement and mass incarceration. Many cities hold public vigils for solitary confinement on the 23rd of each month. This is something we could consider. (A)
 - c. Continue letter-writing campaign against solitary confinement. Have letters ready to sign at the beginning of committee meetings. (A)
 - d. Opportunities, Alternatives, and Resources of Tompkins County (OAR) provides assistance to newly released prisoners who are preparing to enter the work world. This is something we could consider doing in partnership with OAR. (A)
 - e. The committee discussed the idea of forming a reading group as a means of raising awareness and educating parishioners to the issues of mass incarceration and solitary confinement. (S)
 - f. Last year's New Year's Eve Evening Prayer service in honor of the feast day of St. Frances Joseph-Gaudet was a great success. We should consider holding another such event. (P)
 - g. The Ithaca Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) provide transportation for families wishing to visit their loved ones in prison. We could consider doing the same, either independently or in partnership with the Ithaca Friends. (A)
 - h. Add prayers for inmates to Prayers for the People. (P)

3. **Hunger:** The committee talked about concerning itself with the justice side of feeding ministries. Areas of Prayer (P), Study (S), and Action (A) for the coming year include:
 - a. Increased engagement with Loaves and Fishes (L&F), both as volunteers and advocates. (A)
 - b. There was discussion on how to get the parishioners more involved. John suggested asking parishioners to sign up to attend one L&F dinner per year. That would constitute a minor commitment but would introduce 52 parishioners to the work of L&F. (A)
 - c. Some L&F guests have mental health issues. Another way to engage others in volunteering or serving as advocates might be to focus on this area of the feeding ministry. (A)

d. Continue lobbying efforts in this area. (A)

4. Nuclear Warfare and Weapons: This is an area in which the committee would like to re-engage. Areas of Prayer (P), Study (S), and Action (A) for the coming year include:

- a. Publicize and attend the talk by Ira Helfand that will be taking place on the Cornell campus in the spring semester of 2016. Clark will reserve a room in Anabel Taylor for the talk. (A)
- b. Stay abreast of developments around nuclear weapons, including any governmental action. (A)
- c. Encourage committee members and others to receive communications from the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) by subscribing to their newsletter (information available at <http://www.icanw.org>) or by following them on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/icanw.org>) or Twitter (@nuclearban). (S)
- d. Engage in letter-writing campaigns. (A)
- e. Add the EPF prayer to the Prayers of the People and worship as the EPF committee. (P)

5. Gun Control: This is another area in which the committee would like to re-engage. Areas of Prayer (P), Study (S), and Action (A) for the coming year include:

- a. Engaging in letter-writing campaigns. (A)
- b. Writing Op-Eds and letters to the editor in support of Governor Andrew Cuomo's call for stronger gun control measures. (A)
- c. Schedule an appointment to meet with Congressional Representative Tom Reed's opponent for the next election in the 23rd Congressional District, John Plumb. (A)
- d. Add victims of gun violence to Prayers for the People. (P)

In addition to the abovementioned areas of concentration, the committee also discussed other priorities including:

- Reaching out to other organizations and churches to collaborate on peace and justice initiatives. Current partnerships include the Ithaca Prisoner Justice Network and Jewish Voices for Peace.
- Increasing parish involvement in letter-writing campaigns for all of the areas of concentration listed above. We discussed how to get parishioners to not only sign letters but to hand-write their own letters.
- Exploring ways to structure EPF committee meetings around prayer, study, and action.

Two upcoming events were also announced:

- Area Congregations Together (ACT) will hold their annual Multi-Faith Thanksgiving Service at 3pm on November 22nd, 2015 at the Ithaca Friends Meeting House at 120 Third Street in Ithaca. The theme of this year's dinner is "What Do We Bring to the Table?" All are invited to attend. Cora also offered to take any handouts we might like to share to the dinner to have available.
- The Tompkins County Workers' Center will mark Human Rights Day 2015 by holding a letter-writing campaign at Autumn Leaves Used Books (115 East State Street—Ithaca Commons) on Saturday, December 12th (I forgot who announced this. Is it the 12th or 13th???) Is there any information on what time this event takes place??)