

Minutes of EPF meeting, February 6,2014

The meeting was opened with a prayer lead by Linda Gaither.

Attendees: Linda Gaither, Shannon Berndt, Blythe and Frank Baldwin, John Jackson, Robert Chapman, Joey Cardamone, Michael Roman, Ed and Nancy Siemon.

Reports on Issues:

1. Ithaca Prisoner Justice Network: Joey Cardamone reported that the February 1 workshop at the Friends Meeting house lead by the Campaign for Alternatives to Isolated Confinement was well attended and well received. CAIC reported that a bill is being put forth in the NYS legislature to limit solitary confinement. It is a good first step in the process to eliminate abuses in NYS prisons.

Joey also reported that the Stop the Jail Expansion Coalition is striving to delay the Tompkins County jail expansion for a year so alternatives can be studied.

We considered an offer by Jaime Hendrickson to give a presentation about the jail expansion but we decided that Joey could keep us updated on those activities as she is a member of the coalition and attends our meetings.

2. Food justice, Bread for the World: John Jackson reported that \$8.8 billion was cut from SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, “food stamps.”) John suggested that we honor a church saint, one associated with social justice, with a prayer service. Frances Perkins, whose feast day is May 13, was suggested. The group thought this was a good idea. We will investigate this activity.

3. Palestine/Israel: Linda Gaither recommended a video: “The Stones Cry Out” about Palestinian Christians.

4. Iran Negotiations: Robert Chapman presented a draft of a Proposal for an Iranian Study Group that he wishes to send out to EPF members. Linda suggested that this document be sent to the Executive Director of EPF, Alison Liles. This would set the ground work for Robert to have a conversation with Alison to revive the Iranian focus group of EPF. Eventually Robert would like to use this as a vehicle to have a conversation with Senators Schumer, Menendez, and Kirk about their proposal to suspend government concessions to Iran. (Robert, please correct me if I am not accurately recording this in the minutes.) Linda suggested Fellowship of Reconciliation for support and assistance as the Episcopal church is taking a hands-off approach on issues in the Middle East.

5. Technical assistance: Michael Roman showed his work on an EPF link on the St John’s web site. The schedule and minutes are displayed. Mike is asking that we give him some general information explaining the mission and focus of EPF. Shannon Berndt will give Mike information and artwork in a few weeks as she is busy getting married soon but will be free(?) after the wedding is over. Everyone was pleased and impressed with Michael’s help providing information about our activities.

6. Environment/ Care of Creation: Pastor Wanda was prevented from attending due to a pressing pastoral situation. A short report was given by Ed Siemon about the Climate change seminar that he attended at First Presbyterian Church in Ithaca. In this very cold winter, he noted that climate is not weather, so don't confuse short term events with long term effects of carbon in our atmosphere.

8. Blythe Baldwin volunteered to do prayers for the next meeting.

9. Closing Prayer: Linda Gaither

Respectfully,
Nancy Siemon