

Social Action/Outreach Committee Meeting

October 23 , 2016, 9:30 a.m.

To: Social Action Committee: AND: Vicki Aersheim pewterpair@gmail.com for the WEB Site; Marsha Hague Martia@Lynxe.com for Sneak Preview (or review as it were!); Present were Sue Beckham, Mary Emberger, Paula Lugar, Bettsey Terlinden, Martha Termaat

LONG LONG “MINUTES” - but very informative: The best (because it was NEW) part will come at the end: The Caravan to Standng Rock. IF you don’t read the rest, of this lengthy missive, skip to Mary Waters’ plan to take supplies to Standing Rock. AND get to Sue Beckham with corrections or emendations.

1. **Meeting time and location:** Group discussed the possibility of a new Meeting time but, while ideas were floated, conclusions were not reached; **Would members please get back to Beckhams with 2 -3 suggested times and days:** considered in the past have been Saturday morning at Dish and the Spoon, afternoons there or at UUSRF, Sundays after the service, Occasionally the Beckham’s House. Other? We will go from there to something usable.
2. **Amnesty International Card Project:** Martha explained that several prominent prisoners are selected each year to receive many greeting cards during the holiday season – to let their jailers know that we are aware of the unjust situation AND to let those captives know. We will ask UUSRF members to bring cards (preferably not “Holiday” although seasonal are okay) to UUSRF so that we have cards to address. On a Sunday (December 11 probably) volunteers (Our committee is expected to be the core group) will write cards to the selected prisoners. Martha will get them to Amnesty International for delivery. It was suggested that we organize a soup and bread or some other meal for that day. Sue will check that out with Cathy.
3. **School Supply Giveaway and Backpack Program (Report via Bettsey Terlinden):**
 - a. **School Supplies:** Late each summer, through volunteers and donations from River Falls, the City of River Falls gives school supplies designed to match what each child will need for her/his particular classroom. (The location for the “giveaway” has shifted from St. Bridget’s to the Congregational) Supplies range from backpacks and calculators to pencils. Teachers and schools let the city know what will be needed– and design “shopping lists” for each

classroom; volunteers from the city (churches mostly) take children singly “shopping” at the Church depot so that every child comes to school fully supplied. Local businesses donate many of the products and others have sales targeted to this event and to families who need the supplies. In 2017, the give away day will be either August 7 or 14.

Bob Gustafson, chair of that program put Bettsey on his list as UUSRF Contact.

b. School supplies themselves: Can be donated at any time. They are stored at the Congregational Church. . Fewer supplies than money get donated these days. Some people enjoy shopping at the school supply sales and taking them to the drop off site and some children enjoy “shopping” for a particularly appealing backpack or color of pencil. Items such as back packs, washable markers, file folders, scientific calculators, can be donated.

c. Money Donations: Can be made any time during the year to a special fund at the Congo church, earmarked for it. Checks to be made payable to **First Congregational Church** and marked in the memo line **for School Supplies.**

4. Backpack program: Emanating from **Our Neighbor’s Place**; on Fridays, children are supplied with backpacks full of nutritional food so that the whole family has plenty to eat on the weekend. Our **UUSRF Social Action/ Outreach Committee** donations help with that program.

5. The Scholtus Service: Each January, close to the time of the first UUSRF Service, we honor our founders Mickey and Jay Scholtus who made this all happen. Members may remember that, last year, David Bisonette, a teacher of the Ojibwa Language and Culture at LaCourte Orielle Ojibwa Community College did the service. All agreed that he should be invited back. –and that will happen. We will speak with the Program Committee about a 2017 program featuring him again. **HOWEVER**, the 2017 Scholtus Service should feature someone we haven’t heard recently. See **Ecumenical Asylum Committee** below for this year’s plan.

6. Ecumenical Asylum Committee: In 2016-2017, we have a very important Social Action Program happening in River Falls, Heidi And her four

children... have moved here from Guatemala. All are learning the English language and American ways (to the extent they wish or need to). The children are doing great in English. Heidi is learning (but it's always slower for adults). **Last Friday Heidi had her day in Court and was granted asylum in this country** (and in our community which had accepted the family long ago. It will still be a few weeks before she can legally hold a job in this country). This, year, Ecumenical Asylum Committee leaders Bobbie Kuhn and Barb de Souza (to which Mary Emberger and Sue Beckham as Representatives of UUSRF belong) have agreed present a program about Heidi's family and their journey to become residents of River Falls. We plan a meal afterwards – perhaps with Heidi helping us prepare a Guatemalan feast.

Meanwhile Mary Emberger raised about \$200 from the Congregation; Beckham added \$100 from the Social Action Committee to make a \$300 donation from UUSRF to the Ecumenical Asylum Committee to help with the continued needs of this family.

7. **MARY WATERS – longstanding inactive member of this committee suddenly got active again!!! The Caravan to Standing Rock: Mary** announced that she has a 2001 Honda which she is prepared to drive to Standing Rock with supplies for the protesters. I volunteered that Dick and I would take our Honda and go with her with more stuff. **Bob Emberger** was so enamored of the idea that he contacted someone in the know today (**Bob, if you see this, please let us know whom you contacted**) **What Bob found out:**

- a. They don't need clothes
- b. They do need sleeping bags, blankets, camping stuff
- c. batteries (probably plain flashlight batteries BUT MORE IMPORTANT – the kinds of batteries that one uses to light a camp site, a tent, whatever.
- d. They could really, really use gasoline cards (somebody suggested that at the meeting).
- e. Don't know yet about food, but I'm guessing non-perishable food that can be boiled to edibility in water with other stuff that lasts and has plenty of nutrition. (a number of fall vegetables can be kept cool for weeks.)
- f. I would think camp lanterns and stuff.
- g. Get back to us with ideas -.

OKAY NOW WE NEED A DATE!! Suggestions? Off the top of my head I think the day after the election would be good.

And we need an announcement in next Sunday's service (Perhaps Mary Waters would do that. , on the WEB, in Sneak Preview. I'll send those when I get suggestions from you –very soon!.

8. How we will use our charitable budget for 2017-18 ?

- a. In the past the Committee has agreed that local charities are preferable (That excludes Standing Rock – but we are planning to do that with separate donations I think. (any new ideas?) -- The Social Action/Outreach Committee has been granted an \$1100 budget for 2016-2017. So far donations have been made to the Free Medical Clinic (\$200); Ecumenical Asylum Committee (See above); Our Neighbor's Place (\$100); ARC \$100 (2015)
- b. CAB \$100 (2015)
- c. We can easily use the remaining budget, but being open minded, we are willing to accept new recipients. Other suggestions???