

## Open and Affirming Committee Meeting Minutes December 11, 2007

Present: Gail Hall, Chairman, Michael Bower, Laurel Cole, Mary Dean, Tim Dostie, Katie Hoffman-Fulda, Bill Hoffman, Pat Howland, Bob Inderbitzen, Ron Robbins, Tom Rolfe, Wendy Ware

Absent: Stephanie Heneghan, Steve Smith

Tom Rolfe opened the meeting with a prayer.

Minutes of the November 13<sup>th</sup> meeting were accepted as presented.

Gail distributed a list of questions and issues drawn from both the open forum meeting on November 13<sup>th</sup> and items collected from the suggestion boxes since then. The committee was asked if there were any items we wanted to remove, i.e., not consider for any reason. The committee elected not to remove any items from consideration.

Gail asked the committee whether we should survey the congregation on whether the church should declare itself ONA. The intent of the survey is to use the results as a baseline for later comparison. After discussion, the committee elected not to administer a “baseline” survey at this time due to the difficulty of associating baseline data with follow-up survey data. There was still interest in conducting a survey, but at a later time after the committee has had more time to share information with the congregation. The need for a survey was tabled for discussion at a future meeting.

Mary offered preliminary categories to use for organizing the input we have received so far:

1. ONA
2. the Bible
3. the impact of ONA here and at other churches
4. what it means to be gay

The committee discussed then accepted the categories offered.

The committee received input from the Advisory Committee, including:

- Be aware that during the process of ONA that other issues may be raised (i.e., racial, ethnic, disabled, etc)
- Consider offering a session on ONA topics in this year’s Lenten series

Ron reminded us that our church Constitution incorporates a specific reference to race (“...binding in covenant faithful people of all ages, tongues and races”) in our Statement of Faith.

The committee next assigned a category to each input item received and weighted the categories by personal vote to determine which categories to address first. The categories chosen were 1) ONA and 2) the Bible.

The next task of this committee is to develop a list of joint educational opportunities for both committee members and the congregation. Three subcommittees were formed to address the two categories and to maintain ongoing communication with the congregation. Members of these subcommittees are:

- ONA
  - Mary
  - Tom
  - Michael
  - Bill
  - Wendy
  - Stephanie
  
- The Bible
  - Bob
  - Tim
  - Ron
  - Laurel
  - Katie
  - Pat
  
- Communications
  - Gail
  - Steve

The next (2) committee meetings were scheduled for Thursday, January 10<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday, January 22<sup>nd</sup>. We will consider continuing the pattern of meeting on the second Thursday and fourth Tuesday, if that works out well for us.

We will allot (60) minutes in our January meetings for subcommittee work and (30) minutes for full committee work.

Mary will offer the opening prayer for our next meeting and Michael the closing prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Hoffman (temporary Secretary)