**Minutes of the Meeting**

**Utah Via Cristo Secretariat**

**Thursday, July 20, 2023**

**Good Shepherd Lutheran Church**

**Sandy, Utah**

The meeting was called to order by Lay Director Bonnie Davis at 7:00 pm. Present were Pastor Neil Arnold, Bonnie Davis, Wendy Miller (Finance), Brick Thompson (Finance), Mary Kartak (Secretary and Ultreyas/Liaisons,) Ruth Hanslik (Allocations), and Rick Hanslik (Webmaster). Pastor Neil had sent out a Zoom link, but no one utilized this option.

Bonnie stated that she has located and reviewed the “Mission Statement and Purpose” and, “Secretariat Leadership and Organization” supplied from our national organization and a sample constitution also from the national organization. Mary supplied her with the booklet “Essentials of Via de Cristo” and an unsigned copy of our By-Laws dated 2003 plus another unsigned copy dated July 2014.

Bonnie distributed pocket size copies of the Prayer for the Gift of the Holy Spirit. Those present recited this together. Bonnie distributed the agenda.

Brick made a motion seconded by Wendy to approve the minutes of the May 18, 2023 meeting as distributed via email. Motion carried.

Pastor Neil reported on his pastoral interactions. He stated that he had conversed with Pastor Jeff Tally, discussing getting Via de Cristo going again. The 2 concurred that rebuilding community and re-emphasizing renewal groups were keys. Pastor Neil would like to learn who is currently meeting in renewal groups and then try to get others engaged. Wendy wondered if those currently “grouping” are following the Green Card. Neil emphasized that “Church is not a closed group” and promoted welcoming additional persons and dividing if the number in one group becomes uncomfortably large. He stated that in theory, individuals who sponsor should actively help their sponsored individuals become involved in a group. Mary stated that in Walk to Emmaus, a listing of active groups along with contact information is distributed at the end of a weekend. Doing so during Ultreyas was suggested. Bonnie is hoping to make a “Renewal Group Coordinator” an elected or appointed position in the Secretariat. That person might also suggest topics and materials that groups might utilize as suggested by Wendy.

The question was asked whether the national organization might be a resource regarding Renewal groups. Rick stated that the national VdC in addition to many chapters are struggling. Ruth stated that portions of Minnesota VdC have dissolved. She explained that in Minnesota there is but one Secretariat with groups within that umbrella.

Bonnie read an email that was submitted by Bill Lange. Via de Cristo has a Thrivent Account which has a current balance of $4,596.92. Taking funds from that account requires 2 signatures. The current checking account balance of approximately $300 is significantly less than the usual balance of approximately $5,000 which has not been recently necessary since no weekends have been held since September, 2019. Current anticipated expenses are a Web hosting costing $68 per year and Constant Contact which bills monthly at $49.40. Brick, Tom Kraus, and Bill Lange each currently have a debit card. If The music license, (CCL) is not paid, only music that is in our songbook can be played. Wendy made a motion to transfer $1,000 from the Thrivent account to the checking account. This was seconded by Mary and the motion passed.

It was stated that in the past $3-400 was typically donated as JOG at Ultreyas but that JOG was not collected at the Silver Celebration.

On a side note, Rick reported that 431 emails go out through constant contact with 114 being opened and 81 bouncing back. Rick also reported that Utah Via de Cristo has a Facebook page. Rick also stated that he might have a copy of the Utah Via de Cristo Constitution as he has the VdC laptop in his basement. Rick also stated that Evan Bennett might have a copy of the constitution. Bonnie stated that she would contact Evan regarding this and whether he might also be willing to be involved with the secretariat.

Mary was asked to report on Ultreyas. Our Savior’s in Roy will be hosting a 3-5 pm gathering on August 20 with the Secretariat to meet one hour prior. Bonnie will promote via Facebook. Mary will get information to Webmaster Rick for Constant Contact. She will also ask liaisons to promote in their church bulletins and other media resources. She will schedule additional Ultreyas, first attempting to arrange gatherings in those churches where some participation/interest was expressed related to the Silver Celebration. Sunday afternoons were identified by those present as preferred and holding the Ultreyas at a church rather than any alternate venue was stated as preferred. Mary will contact those who have served as Liaisons in the past with the hope that they will continue in that role for the near future. Bonnie asked that members of the Secretariat attend Ultreyas and invited others personally. A probable scheduling in January, April, August, and October was suggested. Bonnie voiced a hope to “shake things up a bit” regarding Ultreyas. She thought that skits might be fun and felt that we should be inviting persons to come to set-up or tear-down so they feel an obligation/commitment.

Rick stated that it was his understanding that voting positions within the Secretariat are the elected positions. He believes that appointed positions are non-voting. Bonnie stated that she would like to see everyone who has currently agreed to serve within the Secretariat make effort to identify someone willing to serve as his or her assistant. It is her hope that those “assistants” would take the lead role after working with those currently serving for about a year, thus keeping most positions a 2-year obligation moving forward. She believes that once we get our framework established the obligation to serve will require less time and effort.

Rick requested that those present review the UtahViadeCristo.org Website and supply him with corrected information. He is desirous of dates, events, contact information, etc.

Bonnie reported that a suggestion had been made that members of the Secretariat and those interested begin to visit various churches. She envisioned a team bringing brochures, perhaps attending worship services and, if possible, answering questions in an informal way. Mary stated that she has some VdC brochures that she will bring to the August Ultreya.

Bonnie stated that she has made multiple attempts to contact Ann Pritchard as she had volunteered to serve on the Secretariat during the Silver Celebration. She also plans to contact Cathy Ricci as a possible key person regarding regrowing Renewal groups/Prayer chain. Jean Sojourner and Kim Sparkman are also people who have shown some interest in being involved.

In June Bonnie was a part of a zoom meeting for “Lay Directors” and found that informative. She, “Felt better as they are struggling, too. It’s not just us.” She has also been in contact with “Eric” with the Via de Cristo in Las Vegas where positive, enthusiastic things are happening. They hold their weekends at Mt. Charleston and their next weekend is scheduled for Sept 21-24, 2023. They need angels and we might be inspired if we were to assist. Epack6@q.com. They spend approx. $4,500 on a weekend. The Pilgrims or their sponsors pay $35 while the team members pay $200 each.

Rick and Ruth will be leaving in 6 days for the national gathering of VdC. They reported that Las Vegas, Nevada will quite likely serve as the host city in 2024. “Bryan is on fire.”

Pastor Neil stated he was available to serve in a pastoral capacity for the August 20 Ultreya. Wendy stated that she was available for leading music and would recruit Tom Kraus who has agreed to serve as Music Coordinator for the Secretariat.

Bonnie had promised to keep the meeting to 2 hours so the meeting was adjourned at 9:07 pm. Pastor Neil then lead us in pray which concluded with the group reciting of the Lord’s Prayer.