

Witness Commission meeting

January 23, 2019

**Attendees:** Chair, Peg Over, Mandy Hileman, Peggy McFarland, Amy Karr, Jordan Eberhart, Pastoral Liaison Greg Davidson Laszakovits,

**Discussion:**

Recap – Peggy McFarland is filling in for the 1 year unexpired term.

Jordan and Amy will be attending the February 2019 Board meeting.

Witness Action Alerts –reminder to sign up to receive the alerts.

**#275BucketChallenge:**

Greg shared that several months ago Elizabethtown COB was tagged in a video posted on Facebook by Annville COB. Annville had recently completed a 250 bucket challenge for Church World Service (CWS) and challenged us, along with Ephrata and McPherson COB, to do the same.

Greg and Peg mentioned that about a year and a half ago we completed 100 buckets as part of a district initiative. Everything had been donated and we used money out from Outreach & Ministries to offset the cost of shipping. (\$3/bucket for shipping)

Amy and Jordan have upped the ante and set our goal to complete 275 buckets vs. 250.

The group concluded that we will order 275, 5 gallon, buckets which will be filled with items that can be provided to individuals affected by natural disasters. Amy will do some research on where the items can be purchased at the best price and has the list of items required from CWS. (CWS estimates the cost at \$75/bucket) Peg stated that Marian Bollinger has a U-Tube video with some tips and tricks. 5 gallon buckets can be ordered from U-line, the group decided that we would utilize funding from the \$5,000 carried over from last year from O&M to purchase the 275 buckets.

The buckets will be filled in one of two ways. Individuals may take a bucket at the end of service, committing to fill the bucket with the necessary items, and will return it to the church once all items are purchased or they may make a monetary donation, possibly \$50-\$75/bucket to sponsor or support filling a bucket. (Checks to be written to Etown COB, memo line will include 'bucket'.)

In addition to soliciting funds from the church, Amy will reach out to local hardware stores (ie. B&G or JB Hostetter & Sons) and local business to see if they would be willing to provide items at cost, provide any donations, or discount items if bucket checklist is provided. She will also verify if they have the items available in stock. Amy stated that she will champion the challenge and Jordan volunteered to provide her with support.

Amy discussed the possibility of creating an amazon wish list with the items required. The group discussed encouraging the congregation to include friends, colleagues, family, etc. in the bucket challenge.

Track who takes a bucket (sign out sheet), committee members will take turns covering sign out sheet after service.

Greg mentioned that while speaking with members of the Capital Campaign committee, March/April was discussed as a potential date for the bucket challenge. We discussed the kick off date being Sunday, March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2019 through Sunday, April 21<sup>st</sup>, 2019. Amy mentioned 2 weeks for monetary donations for the Buckets, Greg stated that he would think on that and follow up. Greg stated that he will also discuss the bucket return process with the pastoral team due to storage limitations in the church. The group talked about a tentative return date for the buckets of April 28<sup>th</sup> or May 5<sup>th</sup>, the group will discuss further at the meeting in February.

Some additional ideas discussed by the group were to bring the filled or monetarily sponsored buckets back during service. Or to place the empty buckets on one side of the sanctuary, the congregation will be able to see them leaving the sanctuary, and as the buckets are returned and filled they will be placed on the other side of the sanctuary.

Peggy had suggested showing the Facebook video, from Annville COB, during service when we are asking for the donation from the congregation.

**Appointments:** Peg is working to get the list updated and once completed will return the list to the Church Office.

**Congregational wellness committee:** is disbanding and are assigning items to other committees. Peg will be following up with both Nancy Becker, regarding the blood bank, and Peggy Schaeffer, who is one of the contacts for The Holiday Gift Drive.

**Brain Storming for Outreach:** Greg asked about any ideas from the group to strengthen our outreach and to think about what outreach looks like for us at Etown COB. Amy mentioned Instagram stories on Sundays and potentially 30-60 second “snippets”. The group discussed sharing specific examples of the church community as a safe place. Amy asked about new members and Greg briefly discussed that the congregational size is growing, but annual attendance is staying the same. Greg stated nothing is “out of bounds” and the idea of “tool building” to support people who want to share the message with their friends, neighbors and community. The group talked about highlighting the “themes” of services on social media. Peggy said it is important to continue to incorporate relevant topics in the sermons. Things to consider, maintaining privacy of children when sharing pictures/videos on social meeting. Peg suggested to continue to discuss Outreach monthly and Greg mentioned that there is funding available through the communication budget, if the need arises. **Action Item:** Amy will trial an Instagram Story and will also look at what other churches are doing. (Amy can teach those of us who are “Instagram challenged.”)

The group discussed one of the goals this year to be increasing our Outreach.

Greg spoke about the Immigration Support committee who is working with HAIS and is applying for a grant that, if secured, would match the \$5,000 the committee intends to raise to support immigrants with their legal fees.

Pledge to the Community Place in Washington –\$500/month over the next 3 years

April 17<sup>th</sup> for Mark Cunningham, executive director, for COBES will be coming to speak to the congregation about what COBES does and to discuss how we can support their efforts.

**Upcoming:** Ad hoc meeting February 6<sup>th</sup> (meet to discuss what Amy’s finding for the bucket challenge along with a potential timeline, commitments, communications, etc.)

March 6<sup>th</sup> meeting – Continue conversation regarding Outreach. Think about what else we can do with our U-Tube channel.