

Witness Commission meeting
Wednesday July 18, 2018 – 6:30p.m. – Pastor Greg ‘s office

Attendees: Peg Over (chair), Michelle Clapper, Paula Knudsen Burke, guest, Doug Lamb

1. Doug Lamb presentation about “Community Place on Washington,” a facility that would provide community social services.

Doug’s comments:

Etown COB is familiar with the United Churches, but a lot of changes have occurred over the years. He just presented to West Green Tree COB. He pastored at the Lancaster Fellowship in East Petersburg (closed in 2009), then came back to Elizabethtown.

United Churches started in 1960s to help families with food, clothing, etc. There are four meetings a year, but the organization is fast moving out of that “club feeling.” They just bought land. He said it is poor timing for Etown COB because we now have our own building committee. But he said we continue to be a big part of what the United Churches do. Beth DeGoede is an example of one of the involved persons from our congregation.

He is the chaplain of the United Churches. One of the pastors of Sell Chapel retired. Her name was Margaret. The chaplain is one of the executive committee members and he is tasked with going around and explaining what they’re up to. He is presenting to different churches and asking them to participate as they feel led. We’re the 15th church he has presented to and he is hoping to get 20 churches to participate out of the 30+ in the community.

There has to be more intentional planning. #1 buying a property #2 reorganization, what worked for 40 years won’t work now. He then hands out a history of how we go to where we are. The history is part of the PowerPoint that was presented to Elizabethtown Borough to get a variance to allow for a building for social services.

He wants our church to have a representative in August come to the official launch. The school closed in 2012 due to a lack of students. The building has been used for Sunday School classes.

They are in Phase One right now, taking buildings and reusing them. For instance, two apartments are to be used as transitional housing. They will host GED classes. Jen Kenney, the Etown School District social worker, is involved. Phase Two is the new building that would offer more space for a lot more activities. There is so much storage involved for services such as food pantry and clothing bank. There are a number of community groups that will operate out of the building.

One of the things they want local churches to consider is how churches can be involved, such as getting involved with music, or cars. If there is someone who wants to work with young people, how can they have that opportunity?

Questions – Michelle – what would reorganization look like? Doug: United Churches will be the primary owner of the property. There are license agreements. Jim Reeb from the College is going to help. Each of the groups will pay to have space. But the term for using the space cannot be

“rent.” Churches will be asked to have delegates come out to board meetings. He thinks that it will take some months for the change to take effect.

Paula will the board vote on license agreements? Doug – yes, the board is now five people. But it will increase. There will be a governing board (pastor and up to 3 delegates per church-it could be very unwieldy). The idea would be two meetings per year for the governing board. Then there would be a “management board” for the campus. An administrative person would need to be hired. They are putting together a job description. It’s a growing evolution. He said they don’t want to get into “weird things.” They’re not going to open up counseling services space because there are other offices in town that provide that service; that don’t want to duplicate what is already existing.

Doug handed out a “Welcome Policy” that describes that “no guest shall be denied service or offered a lesser standard of service because of expressing their Christian faith, no faith, or a non-Christian faith.”

Chuck Holt from the Factory will be providing training about how to serve people from diverse backgrounds and help encourage churches to find common ground:

<https://thefactoryministries.com/our-team/>

Doug then handed out the “Local Congregational Involvement” sheet that asks for four things:

- 1) Prayer
- 2) Nominate member to represent the church (new delegate)
- 3) Provide construction workers, helpers and cleaners (there will be a sign-up genius)
- 4) Consider being a pledge partner

Doug then handed out a “pledge partner” form. The property was purchased for \$330,000. There is a \$100,000 loan that must be paid back. \$150,000 remodeling costs. The overall goal is \$1.8 million. This fund is an effort to get basically an escrow fee. They hope to work with Everance. Churches get to decide how to pledge. Jim (Etown College advisor) says he needs 10 churches @ \$500/month. If 20 churches participate at varying amounts, that would also work. Churches can decide to pledge for one, two or three years. At the end of three years, any unused funds will be returned to churches.

He would like to have an idea of the commitment (dollar amount) by beginning of Sept. but actual payment doesn’t start until January 2019.

Doug said in one church he met with Outreach Committee, then the whole board, then he is going to present 5 minutes to the entire church. He is willing to present to whoever we need to.

Michelle asks how this will impact current organizations, or what might happen in the future when a new idea comes along. Doug – it’s a valid question. Whether it’s a church or an organization or a ministry, how do you maintain 15 years in. The answer is two-fold. Churches have to understand how much influence, if the outcome is consistent, get people sold. Then working with newer pastors and changeover. He says the “Hub” will be a way to connect some of the dots. He said he is a little scared about the United Way’s new way of giving.

Peg says she is confused about the “Hub.” Doug said that is the United Way’s channeled giving. Michelle says she is wondering how the things can work more smoothly. Doug said he met with the Child Care center and part of the goal of opening the center is encouraging efficiency.

Paula asks if the idea is one-stop shopping. Doug said yes, and the center will be advertised with the borough and school district.

Michelle asks what is happening with other churches and businesses. He said that he is ad hoc on all the committees. Kevin Dolan was supposed to be the chairman but he withdrew because he was on the church that was selling the property. August 18 is the public event (he hands out kickoff paper). Dignitaries and news media will be invited. The Advocate will run an interview soon.

Paula asks if there is a website, Doug says yes, it is on the brochure (Peg circulated a copy of the brochure). <https://communityplaceetown.org/>

Paula asks if he would be willing to talk to our big board. Peg said the board meets August 13. He is also willing to answer questions by email: doug@douglambconstruction.com

He said one of the frequent questions he gets is “why not GEARS?” or “why not the Moose downtown?” He said they looked at the Moose four years ago and the price is right but needs major renovations and not a lot of parking. GEARS wasn’t really interested.

Peg said we can send out the request for construction helpers. Doug will email Paula the Sign-up Genius link. Doug said the goal is to move the food pantry over to the location in October. ECHOES will move over to the white building now and then into the new space later.

END OF DOUG’S PRESENTATION, COMMITTEE DISCUSSION: Paula said that it was a helpful presentation and asked what we were supposed to do, whether we were to present to the board. Peg said neither she or Peggy was available and asked if anyone could go Aug. 13. Sam said he would go if he didn’t have to work. Michelle asked if we would recommend a specific amount and Peg said we could. Paula asked if we should ask the board if they want a recommendation from us.

Peg went down the hall to check in with Pastor Greg about what the board wanted. He said it would be helpful to have a recommendation from the Witness Commission. Greg said the past two capital campaigns (Brethren Village and Camp Swatara) may have had different funding streams – O&M or Witness, or both.

Paula said she was glad to see the non-discrimination statement. Sam noted that there wasn’t a category about protection of non-citizens.

There was discussion about lack of specificity about details on the board. Sam said we could wait until January to see how things pull together.

Paula said she could not endorse three years. Michelle agreed.

Peg queried if anyone had concerns about not meeting in August, everyone was fine with that plan. Peg suggested Wednesday, Sept. 5 @ 7 p.m. Greg walked in and said he was good with that. Peg said she is going to invite Beth DeGoede to the Sept. meeting.

2. Informational update: final total of CWS hygiene kits- 61 kits delivered to New Windsor and \$216 (shipping and donations) mailed to CWS. Good response!
3. Report on planning meeting for Nov. 18 Brethren Global Mission Celebration to be held at Lancaster COB. Peg said all we will do is advertise for it. The speakers are from Haiti. They are at Miami First Church and they do medical mission work. They want to have a mass choir. When Peg receives she'll send it to Josh. Paula asked if they wanted money, Peg said they didn't say anything about it.
4. BHA Supporter Appreciation Event to be held @ Etown COB. Pastor Greg read email from their executive director. She said that in November there would be a small, intimate donor event for about an hour and asked if we would be interested in hosting. The date is the 5th or 8th. Greg said it seems to fall under the Witness umbrella. She said light refreshments and desserts would be helpful. Paula asked about the "Meals for Members" folks.
5. Play "Courage Rising" Monday September 24 @ 7:00p.m. in our sanctuary. John David Bowman wrote up something for the newsletter. The author gave some pictures. That will be advertised. Pastor Greg will do the follow-up discussion. Peg said she didn't have a real strong feeling about refreshments. Paula asked where it would be. Peg said in the sanctuary. Michelle said it is a heavy topic and refreshments could be a comfort level. Paula said maybe punch and cookies. Sam said he did talk to Amy Shorner-Johnson and she will promote it. She wondered if it would be on the FaceBook page, and how it will be framed to welcome community members so that they won't be evangelized.
6. SERRV work day Thursday September 6 in New Windsor. Peg said there will be a piece in the newsletter.
7. Camp Swatara staff (Etown COB) bonus – There are three camp counselors: Nate DeGoede, Marina McDonagh, Alex Mora. Paula asked if Outreach and Ministerial Education is where money would come from. Greg said yes. Paula threw out the figure of somewhere between \$700 and \$800. Peg said Naomi already got money from us (\$1,200) but she won't need money until the spring. Greg asked how that would impact the O&M. Sam said the camp counselors will likely be excited about the unexpected stipend money. Michelle says she would be more inclined for a lower amount. Peg proposed \$750 per counselor and she'll get together the check request. Paula asks if we could send a card. Greg said the Ministry Calling Committee should be notified. Peg will notify their chair, Ralph Detrick. Peg said she'll aim to send checks around end of August. The group acknowledged that this could be a repeat stipend in future years. Sam said we should talk about how we advertise or give money to youth, such as those who would be leaders at NYC because it's a lot of time and money. Greg said we should revisit the topic of O&M publicity/advertising.
8. Just FYI- Immigration Support Committee- Damon Wagner Fields, chairperson