

# DEACON PLANNING/ORIENTATION MEETING MINUTES

Saturday, September 23, 2006

8:30 AM – 12:30 PM

**Attending:** Betty Berghaus, Louise Holland, Scotti Harwood, Darren Skeen, Bill Burig, Bill Hatch, Jim Joseph, Anne Vann, Dorene Palermo, Nancy Safrit, Bill McAvoy, Duck Rufty, Jeff Sutton, Sharon Barnes, Sally Keener, Michael Reich, Holly Borden.

## Meeting Goals:

- A. Introductions of newly ordained Deacons.
- B. Discussion of past year accomplishments/challenges.
- C. Discussion and identification ways to improve the committee process and
- D. Development of strategies for the coming year.
- E. Fellowship and reflection on the mission of this church and the mission of our religion.

**Michael Reich, moderator**, welcomed everyone and gave an overview of the day's events.

**Betty Berghaus** lead a devotional based on Mark and challenged the group to respond to Mark's message on servant-leadership. Serving as a deacon is not for recognition or personal benefit. Mark tells us the first shall be last. God wants service, obedience and humility when we serve. God is with us as officers, and we should work on our spiritual life everyday. Betty guided us to make time for a morning devotional or time for silence and prayer, mealtime grace, and evening devotional and reflection.

Each member introduced himself to the group. Michael then reviewed the meeting dates for the year, explaining that **the diaconate meets the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of each month at 7:00 PM in room 105.** The exceptions to fourth Sunday will be: **November 19<sup>th</sup>, December 17<sup>th</sup>, and May 20<sup>th</sup>.**

**Review of the Committees and their functions:** Committee chairs reported on an overview of the past year and the areas of responsibilities for their committee, the effectiveness of the committee structure, and plans and or concerns for the coming year. Michael we all consider (1) how the new committee structure is working, and (2) is it time to make modifications?

## How do we guarantee more congregational involvement?

- **Global Outreach Missions – Bruce Capehart** described this committee's mission as opportunities to serve outside Durham County with a major focus on disaster relief in the US and around the world. See responsibilities chart for a fuller description of the activities that are included with Global Missions.
- **Local Outreach Missions – Jeff Sutton/Sharon Barnes** shared concerns for the effectiveness of this committee in its present structure. The committee's areas of responsibility are vast, encompassing nearly 80% of the diaconate budget. Jeff's concentration this past year has been to identify all the benevolences in this committee's domain and get some definition to those organizations in terms of WPC's involvement other than financial gifts, and a clearer picture of what each organization is accomplishing. Based on his recommendations to make Local Missions Committee more manageable, effective and pro-active, and to ensure that our gifts reflect good stewardship and the desires of the congregation, all present

helped divide the numerous agencies and organizations into sub-categories, each sub-division with its own Program Officer. See chart for this new structuring and assignments of responsibility.

Jeff explained he is concerned that we are not making decisions about the spending of our benevolence monies based on research good stewardship. Typical of the concerns about our local mission giving of both time and money is the discussion about IHN and our on-going role with that organization. What we found, once some investigation was conducted, was a struggling agency with possibly poorly managed operating procedures, or at least management in a state of flux and redefinition. It prompted the deaconate to agree that the board of deacons and every agency/organization we support should be accountable to questions like these:

- How is the agency/organization moving forward?
  - What is the agency doing with existing legacies? – an effectiveness assessment.
  - Who else is serving this population/need? Research other options, other agencies that serve the same needs, and maybe even do so more effectively.
  - What does the congregation want to support with our local mission funds?
  - What is the mission's focus? (Ex. seed money with great need, or set of issues such as homelessness, etc.)
  - What are the liaisons/advocates/contacts to each agency/organization reporting back to the deaconate about the work of the agency receiving deacon financial support? Who from WPC is involved with the agency to learn what is needed and how they used what we gave?
  - What should be included on a template requesting what should be covered in these reports?
- **Congregational Care – Betty Berghaus** reported wonderful success with this new committee. The committee has a full cadre of care team leaders. The structure, chartered a year ago, is working effectively.
  - **Fellowship Committee – Bill McAvoy/Walt Beckwith** reported the year has been a huge learning curve as there was no written record of the responsibilities expected of this committee. Bill M. has worked hard to create a notebook that explains the events of the church that expect support from the Fellowship Committee and descriptions of what duties need to be covered for each event. The committee has pretty much functioned with two deacons as co-chairs and utilized sign-up sheets both within the diaconate and at tables after church services to get the manpower to make these many events run smoothly. See the responsibility for a listing of events facilitated by the Fellowship Committee.
  - **Assimilation Committee – Sally Keener** reported that the Assimilation Committee has been active this first year (as a deaconate committee). The predominant membership is non-deacons, in the spirit of involving members of the congregation in the life and work of the church. This committee has been fortunate to have an active elder liaison at the meetings this past year and a new elder liaison already on board for this coming year. There is a need for *at least* one more deacon member to serve on this committee, and a deacon to commit as a co-chair or at least an active member who might be able to facilitate a meeting a couple of times a year. For a description of areas of responsibility, please see the chart.

**Michael's challenge** to the deacons is to examine how we should go forward with the work of the deacons.

**Committee Assignments for '06/'07 - See attached chart for deacon assignments.**

In addition to signing up for responsibilities on the committees and varied responsibilities of the deaconate, Michael announced the creation of an Advisory Committee to meet one week prior to full deaconate meetings as a steering/planning group to organize and set the agenda. Members are: Michael, moderator; Bruce Capehart, co-moderator; Sally Keener, third year deacon representative; Dorene Palermo, second year deacon representative; Bill Burig, first year deacon representative. Anyone who wishes to join this meeting is welcomed.

**The Diaconate is responsible for almost \$150,000 of annual giving. How are these funds accounted for and what are the oversight mechanisms in place? – Barbara Fletcher, Business Administrator:**

**Barbara Fletcher** presented a comprehensive **Review of the Budget Process**. The report included the role and structure of Ways and Means; distinctions of Operating Budget line items and restricted funds; use of funds; WPC budget process and deadlines; Deaconate process and deadlines; congregational role in budget approval; itemization of deacon controlled funds and global Mission funds as of August 31, 2006; 8-year overviews of the WPC budget in regards to reserve cash, pledge comparisons and total operating revenue comparisons; year to date revenues and expenses including non-budgeted revenues and all funds accounts.

**Betty** offered grace for lunch and the meeting adjourned to enjoy a wonderful meal together.