



Commission on Social Witness Meeting

Notes - Conference Call

March 18, 2016

Present: Susan Goekler, Chair, Richard Bock, Caitlin Cotter,
Jyaphia Rodgers and Christina Sillari

1. Chalice lighting: Richard Bock read from *The World According to Mister Rogers*
2. Check-in and welcome: Commissioners shared from their lives.
3. The minutes of the October conference call were accepted as presented.
4. Caitlin volunteered to take notes and Christina volunteered to be process observer
5. Sermon contest submissions: We reviewed scores that Commissioners assigned individually prior to the call, and then discussed the top scoring submissions in relation to the criteria. The final choice of a sermon titled "Whatever Works" received a unanimous vote.
6. Status of GA sessions:

Susan reviewed the tentative schedule for General Assembly

Susan went over how we had approached the CSAI mini assembly two years ago, and what the role of the Commissioners is in that mini assembly. She emphasized that delegates are focusing on the content, not the wording, of the CSAI proposals.

Christina and Caitlin suggested having some of the expectations and relevant pieces of Robert's Rules and our bylaws written out and printed for the mini assemblies to be sure everyone is clear going into General Session.

We discussed again the historical reasons why the CSW is visibly marked by wearing hats during General Session, and what our relationship with volunteers like the tellers are during General Session (and the need to check in with whoever on the GA planning committee oversees the tellers).

Christina will reach out to the GA planning committee and Susan to the Moderator to talk about General Sessions.

Susan also updated us on her communication with our Moderator about possible training for mini assembly implementation and the Commission discussed our hopes for training.

- a. Mini assemblies - Proposed CSAIs and AIWs – Susan

b. Sermon contest – Christina

c. RJ Implementation - Jyaphia (Caitlin): Caitlin and Jyaphia checked in about their plan for the workshop on Reproductive Justice and how it will be different from previous Reproductive Justice Workshops. The group discussed how to emphasize and clarify the Reproductive Justice focus in how the workshop is framed for attendees.

d. Escalating Inequality – Christina: Christina said one presenter is a person she observed at the Conference of World Religions. She is excited about bringing a faith perspective to issues of poverty and inviting her workshop attendees to action.

e. Hearing on newly selected CSAI

f. A session co-sponsored with Board on the vision for Social witness – Susan: There will be someone from UUA staff, someone from the Board, and someone from the CSW in this conversation about ideas that have been developed (previously by the CSW and otherwise). This will focus on how we as UUs best choose issues and develop statements about them. We talked about the problem of a general lack of knowledge of previous statements, and the format of the discussion and when it will happen at GA

7. Proposal to suspend AIWs in 2017 - plans for alternatives – Susan. CSW discussed how we want to approach this as we look toward GA 2017, and how this is related to the work the Planning Committee is doing with local groups and will allow more space for action at that GA. We also talked about how to also allow for possible justice-centered statements that might arise and looked at the proposals we had put forward about what might replace the AIW process and in particular the proposal the board of trustees was excited about.

8. Old Business:

a. How to engage Escalating Inequality interested parties: Christina/Jyaphia will brainstorm this in the next week and report back on what they are proposing with regards to outreach to different groups on the SOC process going forward. We discussed how this had been done in the past and what had worked or caused problems.

b. Following up with DRUUM: Jyaphia had no update at this time, will be reaching out within the next few weeks.

c. “Review times in guidelines for submitting various required items and whether there is a way to provide more time for congregations - in response to an email received concerning the lack of sufficient time: The time between the 11/15/16 draft statement and the 2/1/17 comments deadline is much too short if you actually want congregational input, given the other priorities of congregational life between Thanksgiving and New Year's.”: Commissioners agreed after reviewing the timeline that there was insufficient “wiggle room” in the CSW timeline to change the dates.

- d. Review the CSAI process visual and see if it can be made more user-friendly, such as a list of key dates from the point of view of a participating congregation. (The current list mixes things that the CSW must do with things that a congregation should do.) - New Commissioners agreed to look at current guidelines documents. Richard and Jyaphia will continue to consider this.
 - e. Do we need to propose a way to update or reconsider previously adopted statements on a regular schedule? No new discussion on this.
9. Staff Update (no GA staff yet): Susan updated the CSW on the need for a high-energy detail-oriented computer-savvy person with patience and ability to operate on little sleep to act as CSW support person at General Assembly. We pay for lodging, travel, and hourly wages. Caitlin will reach out to the young adult office to see if there could be a possibility of someone being a volunteer intern during the year whose expenses are paid during General Assembly. Jyaphia will reach out to New Orleans folks who might want to get a perspective on what to expect next year.
10. No Updates on Assignments
- a. CSW Facebook page - Jyaphia
 - b. Media contacts, ads, and UU World communications - Susan
 - c. Monitor and manage CSW list serve and
<mailto: socialwitness@uua.org> socialwitness@uua.org e-mail account: Susan
 - d. Outreach to youth and young adults: Caitlin
 - e. Ministerial outreach (sermon contest, deadlines for various opportunities): Christina
 - f. Finance/budget/expense reports - Richard
 - g. Volunteer coordinator at GA - Richard
 - h. CSW Alerts - Richard
 - i. CSW web updates - Susan
 - j. Room & site arrangements for any meetings and GA logistics: Susan
 - k. GA Planning committee liaison - Christina
 - l. Liaison to Escalating Inequality - Christina
 - m. Liaison to Reproductive Justice - Jyaphia
 - n. Draft AIW facilitation/ plan training - Jyaphia, Caitlin
11. Next meeting – Talked about the week in the summer when we would meet to draft the SOC- the decision was made to meet the last week in July in Boston.
12. Process Observations: Christina offered process observations, noting that it was difficult to sometimes tell who was trying to speak.
13. Closing: Caitlin offered a poem by Lynn Ungar

Notes by Caitlin Cotter