

MFSA Chapter Meeting Minutes 5/11/06
St. John's United Methodist Church

Mingle & Gather 6:30-7:00pm

Opening Prayer 7:00pm

Study Session 7:05-7:30pm Richard Bates

- Richard Bates led us in a study session from the book *Walking Humbly... Doing Justice* chapter 3: Global Graying
- How do we minister to an aging denomination?
- Need to have senior focused activities.
- Evening activities limit accessibility
- Our churches shared examples:
 - Some churches have retired seniors only choir – they sing a nursing homes for ministry
 - Perform home-bound delivery of communion & church sermons on CD.
 - One church mentioned they have only 8 of 400+ members who are over 65. They are trying to target more seniors to help find daytime volunteers.
 - Grocery runs for home-bound elderly
 - Senior exercise classes.
 - Day time classes.
- Suggest getting seniors involved with childcare programs. Natural bond.

Update on District Conference 7:30-7:40pm Tara Thronson

- It was interesting but wasn't as much information as desired.
- More information will come in the booklet in the mail on Annual Conf
- Mimi Raper gave an update on the Amos Commission. It essentially replaces some of the Church & Society orgs in the church. It's a sanctioned org in the UMC and MFSA may be conflicting with their interests at some churches. Same people resources for both groups.
- This group was developed by Robert Hall and other pastors to get the dormant congregation to take justice seriously. But there's no action from the group. Amos could be a feeder group for MFSA in the future once the people get the ideas in their heads and want an outlet for action. Further, Amos is typically not discussing any controversial topics.
- We think Amos at FUMC sponsored Scott McCown.
- Politically, it seems that people don't want to deal with Church & Society; don't want to fund it. So, Amos provides a place to study the community issues, but does not provide an outlet to take action.
- Mimi may be a speaker candidate for our group.
- They may have outside funding from the healthcare area.

Update on Decision #1032 7:40-7:50pm Rowland Curry

- A church in S. Carolina denied membership to a man because he was gay.
- The man was an active participant in the congregation, participated in the choir, etc. But the pastor refused membership.
- The bishop informed the pastor he was required to receive the man into the church.
- The district superintendent filed a charge against the pastor stating he was not fulfilling his duties of a senior pastor.
- Judicial council reviewed the charge and determined: Does the language of the Book of Discipline give a senior pastor the authority to determine who cannot join?
- Finally, the decision of the bishop was reversed by the Judicial Council.
- This decision was appealed and denied 9 days ago.
- www.herewestandumc.org
- As far as we can tell, nothing will change until General Conference when they look at the Book of Discipline.
- General Board of Church and Society is in favor of reconsidering the Judicial Council decision but the Judicial Council is loaded with “right-wingers”.
- National MFSA recommends:
 - a. Bring resolutions to Annual Conference
 - i. Were unable to push our resolution through the Austin District Conference as the DS stated this was not the proper venue, but advised to take it to the board of the Church and Society council.
 - b. Prepare delegates for General Conference in 2008
 - c. Write to the members of your delegation to General Conference
 - d. Take action in your local church.
 - e. Pray for those who have been harmed. Also pray for those who made those decision and soften their hearts.

Breakout Sessions 7:50-8:15pm

Breakout Group Updates 8:15pm – 8:30pm

- Non-violence
 - Movie Nobility. Would be a good thing for us to sponsor it here.
 - Would like Wanda Holcombe to speak – she is the SWC UMC peace & justice coordinator.
 - Creating a culture of peace seminar.
- State-wide Issues
 - Texas Impact had a meeting about school finance
 - Sponsored by Austin Area Inter-religious ministries
- Monitoring the Right

- Need to get with the Amos Commission and coordinate with them on their learning session for communicating sensitive topics.
- LGBT/Annual Conference
 - Plan to support a booth at Annual Conference – 6/8 & 6/9
 - Plan to support a booth at Pride Festival – 6/10 noon-8pm
 - Trying to raise funds to support.
- Other
 - Ask an Amos Commission contact to be on our steering committee.
 - Some should attend the Annual meeting of the National Board this fall. Need to plan timeline and financially.