

NAIC Meeting, February 7, 2024, Rivier University Dion Center

Attendees: John Rowntree (President), Jocelyn Sharp-Henning (Secretary), Karl Hester, Meta Vornehm (Treasurer), Allison Palm (Board member), Bobbie Knickerbocker, Emily Daversa, Marina Vaz, Matt Hodgkiss, Katy Cowen, Meg Hamm, Tom Woodward.

Joining on Zoom: Betsy Cotton, Patricia Higgins, Judie Bryant, Paul Catsos (speaker), Woody Canaday (speaker), Jennifer Giles (speaker), Nancy Meyer, Leah Rumsey, Nonny Egbonu, Mike Apfelberg, Karla Tolomeo, and Jim Jensen.

Community conversation in small groups: Share success stories of when you have had a conversation with someone with vastly different views than you have and it has gone well.

Presentation: Braver Angels group leaders, St. Andrews Episcopal Church, New London.

Woody: there were 6 volunteers at the Episcopal Church with an even distribution of political views. They began within the church first and then expanded into the community.

Jennifer: they had seen some unproductive interactions within the church and wanted to teach skills of productive communication to get people to speak more freely versus not speaking at all.

Braver Angels offers 10 workshops that teach techniques for positive interactions. LAPP: listen, acknowledge, pivot and practice is practiced sometimes using role playing. A positive productive outcome is the goal. It takes each individual to have an impact.

Paul: is a workshop leader and co-chair of the NH Alliance which meets the 2nd Wednesday of the month. They have held workshops for legislators like Skills for Bridging the Divide.

John asked how the St. Andrews started? Paul: it was based on the baptismal covenant, there was communication before rollout, informational meetings were held, followed by workshops.

Meta asked what happens after the workshops? Participants of the workshops use skills on a daily basis for many occasions. A variety of workshops are in person or online.

Paul: at the workshops people work on topics like How to Disagree Better regardless of the specific issue. There are chances to share, not winners or losers. Participants relearn how to be respectful in any situation. People are paired up to practice basic set of skills. As an example, Interacting on Social Media and Depolarizing Ourselves are workshops.

Woody: anyone can do one workshop or many. You can go online to view workshops to decide whether to hold workshops within your congregation. Braver Angels has moderators, if needed. Sign-ups can be online for workshops online, in congregations, or for NAIC.

Paul: there are ground rules participants use that are posted on an easel. If the conversation starts to become harmful, a moderator steps in to prevent. Each meeting has a structure with delineated expectations of participants.

Woody: differences can be used to divide or come together. Braver Angels works with legislators to increase communication and increase respectful decision making.

NAIC Business:

John announced a full slate of officers for NAIC: Rev. Judie Bryant is Vice President, Jocelyn is Secretary, Meta is Treasurer, and John is President.

The next NAIC meeting is March 6th at United Way. Katy Cowan from Bridges will present.

There are 2 upcoming spring events:

On April 10 for National Poetry month we are organizing a panel discussion at the Nashua Library from 7-9 pm. The topic is sacred poetry in multiple religions. The Nashua Public Library is joining us as a co-sponsor.

Beginning Monday, April 29th, and continuing for 3 more Monday nights, the book My Neighbor's Faith will be discussed over Zoom with a different leader each night.

Treasurer's Report by Meta:

Main account: \$2,173.13

Crop Walk account: \$2,686.20

Choir account: \$904.27

There was no new business. Bobbie asked if we could do intercessory prayers again. Tom Woodward announced that this is his last meeting, due to health issues.

Announcements:

The Greater Nashua Mental Health agency has a 3-year Board of Directors opening if anyone is interested. Contact John for a job description.

Mike Apfelberg thanked Tom Woodward for his many years of volunteering.

Katy and another educator from Bridges will be presenting at the NH Conference United to Serve workshop on February 24th.

Meta announced a Chinese NH celebration on February 10 from 4-7 pm at the Westwood YMCA. The Multicultural Festival will be held on Saturday September 14th this year.

Bobbie offered a prayer for her grandson with leukemia and all children with cancer.

Meeting adjourned at 12:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Jocelyn Sharp-Henning, Secretary