

NAIC Minutes:

September 1, 2021 @ 12:00 noon

Attendance: Jon Spira-Savett, Kristy Besada, Jim Jensen, Meta Vornehm, Kelly Turney, Meg Hamm, Rich Bensinger, Tom Woodward, Anna Molettieri, Matthew Hodgkiss, Karl Hester, Sally Newhall, Karla Tolomeo, Greg Baker, Mike Apfelberg, Kimberly Hester, Aron DiBacco, Nonny Egbuonu, Liz Fitzgerald, Rebecca Green

Introductions

Opening reflection on entering peace and shalom that brings wellbeing to each of us and to the world.

Remembrance of Rev. Bertha Perkins

Breakout for conversation: Over the summer, what has been a spiritual practice or teaching that has helped to sustain or even reinvigorate you?

Open houses of faith:

United Methodism (Kelly Turney, Kristy Besada, Rich Bensinger)

- Methodists: global, connectionalism, three simple rules: Do no harm, Do good, Do what is necessary to stay in love with God. Methodists are in conflict and failing at our rules in trying to work in harmony. We have been spiritually violent to LGBTQ+ folks.
- Main Street UMC is a Reconciling Congregation focused on social holiness and full inclusion of LGBTQ+ folks.
- Founded by John Wesley, who sought to experience God's grace which is for all and to have an assurance of salvation. "Methodist" was a slur, critiquing group members' practices of prayer and aid to the poor.
- Methodism started with small group ministries served by Circuit Riders.
- Arlington St. UMC was seeded by Main Street UMC to serve the people of Crown Hill. It is now a commuter church, but it is committed to continuing in service with the community of Crown Hill. Partnering with a business owned by a Hispanic woman, they deliver 100 free meals to children across the community twice a week and send prepared meals for Meals on Wheels. They also maintaining a community garden at Dr. Crisp to source the little free farm stand at the Arlington St. Community Center.

Campus Ministry at Rivier University (Anna Molettieri)

- Founded by Sisters of Presentation of Mary, an order founded during French Revolution that focused on serving the poor and educating youth.
- The sisters who came to found Rivier College were called to help mill girls get a better education and a brighter future.
- Mission: "Transforming hearts and minds to serve the world." Programming comes from the mission.

- Most of university students report no religious affiliation. Only about 30% Roman Catholic. They are committed to providing Roman Catholic education. Students volunteer in community and can participate in an alternative spring break program.

#### Church of the Good Shepherd (Greg Baker)

- Episcopal Church traces roots back to the 16th century English Reformation and even back to the 6th century (Augustine of Canterbury). They believe in “One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church.”
- Church of the loyalists (to England) pre American Revolution, so fairly unpopular during and after the revolution. Became a minority church.
- Adopted governance similar to the secular realm at the time.
- Only Protestant tradition that did not split during the Civil War.
- CGS is not the first Episcopal church in Nashua. First one lasted about 10 years, and could not keep a priest. Episcopalians continued to worship together in Nashua. CGS Chartered 150 years ago, this fall. Building was finished in 1878.
- The Episcopal Church is a member of the Anglican Communion. They also struggle around same sex marriage and ordination of women. They seek Christian commonality in that Communion in spite of the struggles.
- Works with the Front Door Agency, looks forward to working with NSKS.
- Rector is the person in charge, Chief Pastor, and serves for long term. Curate is someone who is a recent seminary graduate, and it’s usually time-bound (like a medical residency for 2-3 years).

#### Business meeting:

##### Treasurer:

- Account Balances: Main - \$2,463.87, Crop Walk \$1,353.97, Choir \$831.75
- Paper checks only for membership dues.
- Membership forms can be filled out via Google or Paper form.

#### Upcoming plans:

CROP Walk (Becky Green): Will be a real walk this year, together and safe outside. October 24th. Entire event will be outdoors, including at the Temple Beth Abraham, where a huge tent will be in place. Still seeking contacts at Church of the Good Shepherd and Rivier University. Seeking donors to share cost, including shared cost of tent rental. Interfaith leadership team helps to lead this event. We are the second largest CROP Walk in New England! You do not need to be a faith group to participate.

Thanksgiving service: a group has organized the service in the past, exploring what interfaith worship really means. 7:00 the Tuesday before Thanksgiving Day. We expect this to be a virtual event.

Monday Clergy Group: Every Monday morning at 9:00, a group of clergy meets on Zoom to explore coping with pandemic and more. It's on this zoom link, but not meeting on Labor Day.

Water walk (Nonny Egbuonu): Please, remember also, that the Thank You Project of Nashua Water Walk comes up on Sept. 18 at the Greeley Park by 9am. More details are on the website, as per our earlier Press Release. Thanks.

Nashua Area Interfaith Housing Justice Group (Jon Spira-Savett): Meeting twice monthly to work on justice in affordable housing. Working with the Master Plan process for Nashua and trying to network with other groups in the city. 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of the month at 11:00.

Cultural Connections Committee (Nonny Egbuonu): Welcoming Week information is forwarded to the group for distribution. September 12th at Greeley Park from 3-6 pm.

What are other things that the group would like NAIC to explore:

- Immigration
- Antiracism:
  - United Way (Mike Apfelberg): recent spate of anti-diversity has led United Way to update the policy on DEI so that it's clear to the public about how they stand on diversity.
  - Kim Hester: open to coordinating folks who show up to support other organizations at the school board meetings, etc.
  - Nonny Egbuonu: is living in fear of racism, as things have changed. She is uncertain that she will be safe moving about alone.
  - Jon Spira-Savett: We are showing up to support antiracism, regardless of the official activities of the NAIC. We are continuing the conversation about what it means to be an ally. We are blessed to be getting to know younger leaders in the community, and want to be accountable to these young leaders. Leadership has been in touch with Jordan Thompson and Sam Searles of Black Lives Matter to see if we can be at their service. Have invited them to speak. Two tracks: What is allowable advocacy from NAIC? What does our personal integrity require of us?

Announcements:

Sally Newhall: Please hold Jim Leonard (long time group member) in prayer. He is now under hospice care at Bedford Hills. He has occasional decent days and then other days when we've thought the end was imminent.

Greg Baker (Church of the Good Shepherd):

- Welcoming folks back into the building 6:00 p.m. September 28th, in person, ecumenical service to celebrate 150 year anniversary of the church. All are welcome and invited. Please let us know if you want to participate. Please be in touch with Greg Baker or Mike Green.

- Film series: Race in America online film series.
  - Link to register: <https://forms.gle/15FCstoacd3DNmXV8>
  - Tuesday, Sept 14th at 6pm: Dawnland
  - Tuesday, Oct 12th at 6pm: 13th
  - Tuesday, Nov 9th at 6pm: Summer of Soul

United Way (Mike Apfelberg and Liz Fitzgerald):

- United We Sleep: Sleep out benefits Community Impact Fund that goes to local non-profit safety-nets. Raises awareness about homelessness. Moved to November to be colder and more uncomfortable. Middle school and high school age are invited to participate. Be aware that serious, unvarnished information about substance use, homelessness, etc. will be shared.
- Community Baby Shower coming up. Donations are welcomed, including gently used strollers, pack-n-plays, etc. No used clothes, cribs, car seats can be accepted.

Jon Spira-Savett: ask a Muslim anything event. Sept 11th 3:00-4:30. Register at <http://www.eventkeeper.com/mars/xpages/N/NASHUA/EK.cfm?curOrg=NASHUA&curMonth=9&curYear=2021&curKey2=lecture&SelectedDate=9/11/2021#9/11/2021>

Meta Vornehm: Nashua congregation of Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints is looking for partners to create a live nativity, as they don't have enough people to do it all. They have costumes, equipment, etc. If congregations are interested in participating with them, please reach out to Meta, who will pass the information to appropriate persons.