

Minutes

Attendance: Sally Newhall, Kristy Besada, John Rowntree, Meg Hamm, Jon Spira-Savett, Tom Woodward, Allison Palm, Pam Deres, Karla Tolomeo, Tanya Stormo Rasmussen, Meta Vornehm, Laurie Toupin, Jim Jensen, Bobbie Knickerbocker, Kelly Turney, Mary Ann McHugh, Michael Reinke, Mike Apfelberg, sjnpod1,

Sally Newhall - presentation on being Presbyterian, including polity, history, founders, doctrine, emphases of the local congregation, and a tour of the garden grounds.

Introductions

Holiday celebrations

Judaism - Rabbi Jon Spira Savett discussed Hanukkah, with its roots in 1 & 2 Maccabees, Hellenistic Judaism, corruption, desecration of the Jerusalem Temple and restoration and rededication of it in the tradition of the celebration of Tabernacle. The story of oil is later. Foods are cooked in oil. Displayed lights grow as the moon wanes--25th night of the longest month.

Protestant - Tanya Stormo Rasmussen discussed Advent, Advent wreath and candles; Tom Woodward discussed how Christmas calls us to address inequities and that God gives us freedom to give and live ethically; Kelly Turney - Rev. Grace Imatu noted that this Advent might be different during Covid-19. "Don't miss this moment by wishing it was 5 years ago...this is a once in a lifetime Christmas"...look the monsters of ambiguity, exhaustion, pivoting, doing things twice... in the eye." Imatu encourages us to see the monsters and the possibility for hope and a new story to be told. Michael Reinke - cultural appropriation essay with a nod of gratitude to other traditions by Robert Warrior

https://www.rmselca.org/sites/rmselca.org/files/media/canaanites_cowboys_and_indians.pdf

Michael is encouraging land celebrations looking at who occupied the land before. Can we see what we're taking from others and recognize it?

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints - Jim Jensen (They believe that Jesus Christ was born with the spring lambs on April 6, but they get into the Christmas season, where they seek kindness and friendship. They believe the atonement is the most important act of Jesus, which they celebrate every Sunday. Christmas is not a special day for them beyond celebrating with the world.) Meta Vornehm - they don't celebrate Advent. They don't see bumps in attendance at Christmas or Easter.. Emphasizing December as a month of service called "light the world" to share the love of Jesus. Non-religious traditions (foods, etc.) are based on where folks come from.

Unitarians - Allison Palm. Many UUs are not Christians, so this is a dance, but they emphasize the themes of the birth of hope and joy into the world. Other holidays are also marked this month, including Winter Solstice (ancient pagan holiday of the longest night). Children put on a

solstice pageant and do things outdoors in connection with nature to commemorate ever changing world and relationships.

Christian Scientists - Laurie Toupin. No particular Christmas tradition. Each person celebrates their personal traditions. They celebrate the birth of Christ daily. For Laurie, this is about love. Shared a quote from Mrs. Eddy "the basis of christmas is love loving its enemies..." I was unable to keep up with the content.

Treasurer's report on bank balances:

Main \$3,263.87

Crop Walk \$3,498.91

Choir \$951.75

Housing Action Update: we will send updates to the group.

Religious organizations can get a van for boosters. Jon will circle back to organizations who are interested.

Idea of sharing air cleaners for celebrations. Please reach out with resources/needs.

Next meeting: January 5th at 12:00.

Announcements:

- Paul Introcaso & Mary Ann McHugh - Host Homes network working with Ascentria. Want to secure housing for over 600 people in the first 6-8 weeks. Interested in finding host homes for these families but also needs for interpreters, tutors, mentoring, etc. They also want groups to raise between \$8-10,000 per family. Must volunteer as Ascentria volunteer.
From chat: Please contact the Nashua Host Home Network to learn how you can help.
Paul Introcaso p.introcaso@comcast.net
MaryAnn McHugh m.a.mchugh@comcast.net

To learn more about Ascentria and Afghan resettlement visit

<https://www.ascentria.org/our-services/services-for-new-americans/help-welcome-afghans>

To learn more about Ascentria Neighborhood Support Teams visit

<https://www.ascentria.org/neighborhood-support-teams>

