

SMCHA Annual Meeting at First Mennonite Church, Newton, March 12, 2017

Anita Kehr pastor gave devotional.

Budget approved.

Board positions unanimous ballot. Randy Goering motion, Dave Stucky seconded.

Ron Dietzel gave history of First Mennonite, Newton. Migrants from KS & NE from Prussia in 1877 settled in Harvey County. 1877 Herman Suderman first service. 1878 in Newton rented Baptist Church, Needed larger place. Halstead & Emmaus elders helped out. (Hispanic groups meet here on Sunday afternoons now. 1881 larger church. Land at end of Newton, right here. Helped Bethel College get started. Jacob R. Toews. J.J. Krehbiel president of Bethel College board and member of this church. 1887 splits because of membership in secret societies – became First Mennonite. Until 1965 city/country separation. 1890 outreach to OK. 1897 buiklding expanded and again in 1992. Ties to deaconesses. 1908 Ordination of deaconesses, evolved into Bethel College nursing that is now Kidron Bethel. 26 are members of First Mennonite. Sister Frieda Kaufman administrator for 30 years. 1917 Russia Bolshevik. Abraham Warkentin assist pastor here and professor of Bethel College and helped MLA. Helped found Mennonite Biblical Seminary and first president. Depression 1931-32, 300 members, after stock market crash. Didn't stop more building. Paid 60 cents/hr for construction workers. Newton ministerial body threatened closure of this church for using German language. Women work. 815 members in 1953. Non-Menno background now included. Menno Schrag, Mennonite Boys League. 1957 helped Faith Mennonite Church get started. 1969 New Directions singing group sang at GC conference. 1969 Viet Name sponsorships. 1984 Sponsored Hope in Wichita. 1987 Grace Community, group from here helped found. MCUSA joined. MDS cleanups. Sent missionaries. Faith focused/mission minded/community connected.

Curt Goering from Center for Victims of Torture

So many nicknames. He was called Crowbar. Most people don't have much idea about what grandparents or basic family story. Some people need to bury and move on. We actually know a lot. It is good what we do there. "Goering" name brings raised eyebrows. Infamy suspicions still today. Disturbing time. One part of our ancestors. Anabaptists were refugees. Tortured by Catholics & state church. Stalin era many disappeared.

Techniques used centuries ago are used today. 40,000 survivors in MN in last 30 yr. Punish/retribution desired. Torture: Confessions. Threaten. Terrorize. Destroy humanity. Burnings. Beatings. Hung upside down. Mock execution. Participate in torture of others. Some need professional help. Heal wounds individual and families and communities. Training to strengthen and support. Advocacy program in Washington D.C. support. Now our president believes in torture causes much worry. Measure progress toward recovery.

Main headquarters St. Paul and Atlanta where many refugees and almost non-existing help there.

Multidisciplinary help: medical, nursing, psychotherapy, social services, physical massage therapy. Occupational therapy.

They designed a healing house with large windows to allow light, rooms not square, soft colors, subdued. Survivors need to feel safe and stability.

International most operations. Kenya refugees established in 1991. Some born there and still there. Hut is treatment center. Programs in Nairobi with urban refugees = slums, "informal settlements." Amman Jordan largest program abroad. 650,000 Syrian refugees and another 650,000 who have come but not registered and other Iraqis. Zarga closer to Syrian border. About 60% female, 40% children. And northern Ethiopia. Eritrean

refugees. Once inducted into military, service can be until age 54 for men and age 48 for women. Eritrea one of the most repressive in the world.

North Uganda work with former child soldiers "Lord's resistance army" forced to be slaves. Now children re-integrated into communities very difficult.

Training or Iraq rehabilitation. Isis survivors. Traumatized. Just getting off the ground. Similar program in Turkey working with relief organizations, working inside but come out to receive training.

38 programs in U.S. Shoestring operations of 2-3 people. Under contract to supply training. Help human right activists.

In Tunis wanted help to get transportation for handicapped. Learning from other groups from other parts of the world.

Research: Monitoring what we do. Indicators of functionality. Measure and change to become more effective. Keep up with the trends. Experiment with group models and individual treatment.

Advocacy. US has been generous contributors through United Nations, through USAID. 60% funds come through US sources. So senators need to see what is happening. Hold accountability that happens through US and try to understand. We don't know what all happened.

Working to close Guantanamo Bay. This is a form of torture. To be held for so much time with no charge.

New executive orders that affect refugees are worrisome. Refugee Council USA. Impact of Trump administration on their work.

70% are in treatment political asylum process. Progress toward recovery deteriorates. Now a Syrian woman who had been in therapy for over two years has lost hope in hearing Trump view; almost like PTSD primal actions. At least sec of state and Pompei said they would not favor torture measures.

Role of US globally imperfect always but now refugees are fleeing from MN to Canada despite terrible cold weather. Some do recover. Center is hopeful place where they see people who have with a little support gotten back on their feet again.

Answers to Questions:

Pools show public attitude show that people don't want refugees and want punishment.

Funding from many different religions. No religion endorses torture.

What can we do? Last year 115,000 came through Kansas. Governor counter his policies, not our values. Important to do something.

Thou shalt not be a victim. Thou shalt not be a perpetrator. Thou shalt not be a bystander.

Be informed. NGO continues to hammer home what their experience has been. Tell their stories. Human impact of these happenings. Journalists.

How to tell whether someone is a terrorist? Refugee vetting process is very detailed. Interviews with high commissioner for refugees. Involves Homeland Security... Biometrics are used. Extremely rigorous. Takes 2-3 yr. At last Trump directive, some were on the plane to come here after approval and were sent back home. Many people were hurt. That is just a push then for people to be angry and join ISIS.