

Mission Partnership Newsletter

Minnesota Valley Conference in Southwestern Minnesota Synod of ELCA

February, 2017

Highlights from December MVC partnership meeting

The Minnesota Valley Conference mission group with the Vryheid Circuit met Dec. 15 at Christ Lutheran in Glencoe with 21 in attendance.

Pastor Katherine Rood gave the devotion, pointing to Matthew's version of the Christmas story. He reminds us that Mary and Joseph were ordinary people through whom God worked to do very extra ordinary things.

"As a partnership we struggle with communication from one side or another, plus we have doubts of what we should do or not do and it can all be overwhelming," adds Rood.

Katherine reminds us that we are just one ordinary person, but together we are a community of people for through whom God does extra ordinary things in the same way he used Mary and Joseph. "As we come to the close of another year, remember that God cares intimately, passionately and internally about ordinary people like you and me."

Future plans for clothing drive

Oather Martin reported about the spring and fall clothing drives and offered suggestions for how to go forward.

The two clothing drives generated around \$5,000 which is matched for a total of about \$10,000 used to provide about 40,000 nutritional food packs for our Vryheid partners.

Martin suggested a change in pickup plans for this year, asking to set up a day where all churches participating could bring their donated clothing to one location.

The current plan was for Martin to take a small truck for multiple pickups around the conference. Each time clothes would be uploaded to the bigger semi truck in Hutchinson. This makes for a lot of extra labor for a few people.

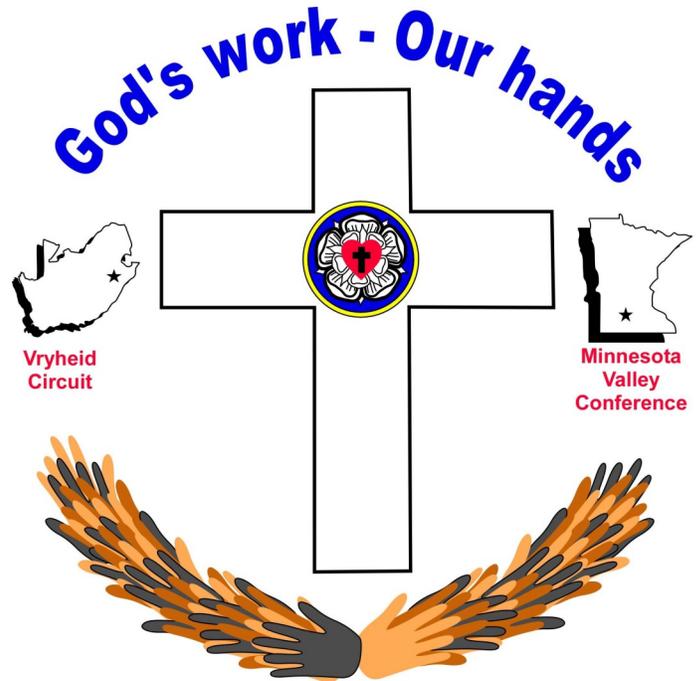
The one day drop off event could also involve a celebration of the ministry. There would be more interaction of people and an opportunity to learn more about the partnership. Food and beverages could be served during the pickup time, provided by the Thrivent funding program.

One suggestion was to have clothes brought to one site in the spring drive and we collect as normal in the fall. There will be more discussion about this at the March 16 meeting.

Books sought for schools

Andrew Hermodson-Olsen represented the education group. He said he had communication with counterparts in Vryheid Circuit regarding request for books for schools, who answered some questions.

It was learned that books for lower elementary students



are in Zulu and English is used by students in grades four and up. A list of books published in English will be gathered along with pricing. Andrew said they seemed excited about our offer.

Conference fundraising idea

Grady St. Dennis shared what happens as a fundraiser in the Crow River Conference involving a music festival each year.

Congregations were invited to offer musical offerings of some sort, including individual or choirs. Information was presented about the partnership ministry and offering was collected for the ministry. Funds for refreshments were provided by Thrivent.

Young adult travel scholarship

Grady St. Dennis said the partnership will come up with an application process for the \$2,500 scholarship being offered by the SWMN Synod to each conference for young adults ages 21-40 to visit South Africa with a conference trip. The program goes for three years.

This is for a young adult who is established in the synod, not so much for high school or college students.

SA Diocese Health and Wellness Coordinator

At the December 15 meeting of the Minnesota Valley mission partnership group Dave Pedersen represented the health and wellness mission team, which has been working on the possibility of bringing to the synod the Diocese Health and Wellness Coordinator.

Since the December meeting the idea was well received at the SWMN synod partnership committee. The synod voted to provide \$1,200 to help cover the air travel cost for a companion to travel with Witness Mbatha, the Health and Wellness coordinator. She will come with Mtombizodwa Langa, the chairperson for health and wellness who is responsible for the advocacy issues on vulnerable people.

Other conferences said they will contribute to the cost of the trip that will be primarily directed by our Minnesota Valley Conference which initiated the project. This means the cost to the MVC will be less. The Bishops have agreed to support the visit that will be May 31 to June 13 with the synod assembly in the middle. A letter of invite was sent by Bishop Anderson to the travelers in order to get the visas.

Plans to host the two guests can be talked about at the March 16 meeting. Some home stays will be needed for hosting. The suggestion will be made to have a MVC meeting June 8 in the St. Peter area so the guests are near the assembly starting the next day. The primary reason will be to visit with our guests.

In other health and wellness group news, the year end report from the Home Based Care program in Vryheid was sent and distributed to the entire group. The big news is that Sister Christina will be leaving and a replacement is sought. The circuit health and wellness committee member also left and will be replaced.

The report shows how the center gives out food packages every month to needy families and orphans. The biggest donation was from our Minnesota Valley Conference.

The next meeting of the Minnesota Valley Conference mission partnership will be 6-8 p.m. Thursday, March 16 at Swedlanda Lutheran Church in rural Hector.

Mission statement

Our Minnesota Valley Conference seeks to deepen its relationship with the Vryheid Circuit for the purpose to strengthen mutually our Christ-centered witness to the gospel and to seek ways we can assist each other in our own contexts in ministry.

Treasurer's Report

Pastor Andrew Hermodson-Olsen presented the treasurer's report for Pastor Jackie Cook at the Dec. 15 meeting.

The balance on Aug. 30, 2016 was \$13,116.09. Income was \$778.00, mainly donations from two congregations. Another donation of \$600 was not listed and will be checked out.

Expenses included \$500 for the Diocese Health and Wellness coordinator, \$3,760.00 for education scholarships, \$500 for a Circuit farming coordinator and \$50 wiring fee.

Balance as of Nov. 30, 2016 is \$9,094.09.

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