

Oneida Community Interfaith Task Force
May 31, 1988
Meeting Summary

Present: Fr. Dean Dombroski, Fr. Jim Dolan, Gordy McLester, Fr. George Lenzner, Barbara Vandenberg, Shirley Goral and Fr. Jim Putman

1. General discussion on the Oneidafest subcommittee report (cf. enclosure)
 - a) The question arose about people being comfortable attending services in other denominations. The Catholic and Episcopal people would have no problems but concern was expressed about Vernon Heim's people. George Lenzner and Jim Dolan will get together with Vernon to discuss the matter.
 - b) Everyone felt that the approach of the subcommittee was realistic.
 - c) An Oneidafest is at least a year away.
2. An agenda (cf. enclosure) for the "Friend to Friend" program was discussed. The following was agreed upon:
 - a) A short history of the Task Force.
 - b) Goal #6, rephrased to read: "To explore avenues of communication and understanding, and to structure vehicles of cooperation between all people of the community."
 - c) The roster of brainstorming ideas on Goal #6 from the January 26 meeting.
 - d) Reactions from the participants in the program. Each pastor will have someone take notes on the discussion. Jim will summarize and collate the notes at the end of the process in the parishes.
3. George suggested the Task Force be renamed "The Oneida Community Interfaith Task Force". Everyone agreed that had a more unifying ring than "Indian/Non-Indian Relations".
4. The first "Friend to Friend" event will be held at Holy Apostles on Sunday, September 18. Jim Dolan will extend a written invitation with details to the other parishes. The event will be publicized through bulletins and the pulpit. Task Force members are asked to talk up the event. Each Pastor will schedule the event according to his own parish worship times.
5. The next meeting of the Task Force will be Tuesday, September 27, at 7:00 p.m.

The agenda for the meeting will be:

1. Evaluation of the first Friend to Friend event on September 18.
2. Strategy for the future.

Jim Putman
Facilitator

Enclosures

Oneida Community Interfaith Task Force

"Friend to Friend"

The Task Force came together for the first time on January 28, 1987. Its membership was composed of people from the various Christian Churches within the boundary of the original Oneida Reservation. The general purpose of the Task Force was to look at possibilities for people to people events which would promote understanding and cooperation among the people of the community. Eventually the purpose became focused in this statement:

To explore avenues of communication and understanding, and to structure vehicles of cooperation between all people of the community.

Participation in the 14 Task Force meetings has varied. Churches still involved are Holy Apostles, St. Elizabeth Seton, St. Joseph, Oneida Methodist, Zion Lutheran, and Immaculate Conception. The Friend to Friend Program is the first activity of the Task Force.

On January 26 of this year the Task Force brainstormed other ways of implementing its goal. The results were:

1. Neighborhood parties.
2. Pastors' columns in the newspapers.
3. Family interchange.
4. Interparish celebrations.
5. Utilizing the Harvest Supper.
6. Parish picnics.
7. Sensitivity at weddings and funerals.
8. Large interfaith gathering.
9. Better communication between the Pastors about parish or neighborhood events.
10. Information forums.
11. Interparish newsletter.
12. Carrying the message beyond our group.
13. Bring various parish groups together, especially the youth.
14. Pastors exchanging pulpits.
15. Laity exchanging their religious experience.
16. Special invitations to non-parishioners to attend parish functions.
17. Education programs.
18. Small home study groups.
19. Develop a home study course.
20. Develop a common project(s) for people to work on.
21. Bring the lay leadership of the parishes together.
22. Recreational events between parishes.
23. Have local people respond in writing to common questions and concerns.
24. Better use of existing parish and tribal events.
25. The parishes of the area sponsor an "Oneida Fest".

What are your thoughts on these ideas, or do you have additional suggestions?



Personnel

DATE: May 26, 1988
TO: Oneida Task Force Members
FROM: David Kiefer
RE: Recommendation of the Sub-Committee

On May 10th the sub-committee of the Task Force met to plan Oneida Fest. Present were: Gordon McLester, Joan Rueden, ^{DM} Matuszck, Dave Kiefer, and Judy and Bernie Cornelli. It became apparent that there was not enough support currently to put on a major event like Oneida Fest. Considerable discussion followed and it was resolved to seek a broader base of support from each congregation by means of a Friend to Friend program. To accomplish this we would sponsor a series of Friend to Friend meetings in the churches. It would consist of an invitation to people from other churches to come to one individual church on a Sunday. After the service each church would sponsor a coffee social so that the guests, hopefully ten couples or so, would be made welcome and would meet other people from the congregation.

The host church would put it in their bulletin ahead of time so that the church would be aware that they were hosting a group. The other churches would put the invitation in their bulletin. Above all else there would have to be a personal contact made by the hosting church members so the guests would know someone when they arrived and they would be welcomed by somebody from the Task Force to make their presence more comfortable.

After one or two swings of this type of hospitality, Friend to Friend, it is hoped there would be a larger base of support for the churches to work together to host Oneida Fest. Until that broader base is found it is the recommendation of the sub-committee to put off further planning for the Oneida Fest.

899