

**First Congregational Church of Woodstock**  
MINUTES of COUNCIL MEETING  
Tuesday, February 9, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom

In attendance: Rev. Dr. Kevin Downer, Moderator: Bob Kirk, Director of Faith Formation: Lisa Haupt, Treasurer: Carl Davis, Clerk: Laura Bond, Charles Bottieri, Lynn Davis, Jennifer Duggan, Debby Kirk, Bruce Lyman, Alexandra (Sam) Lyman, James Nowak, Lisa Nowak, Kathy Packard, Jeff Perkins, Rick Singh, Tom Singleton, Bruce Staehle, Charlene Swanson, Paula Wilmot, Carl Wisnosky

- Welcome—Bob Kirk welcomed all, especially new board and committee members, and briefly discussed his plan to expand the list of invitations for Council meetings to include a wider group of church members and friends.
- Opening Devotion—Rev. Kevin read Chapter 12 of the Book of Numbers from the Inclusive Bible, reflecting on the need to address conflict in communities in the spirit of God’s Grace. With respect to the Annual meeting and review of the events of the past year we need to remember that people act with the best of intentions even though the outcomes may be challenging. Our challenge now, is how do we learn from this, offering grace and forgiveness in hopes of being strengthened by the process.
- Clerk’s Report - Laura  
The December and January minutes were approved and published in Share.
- Treasurer’s Report - Carl Davis
  - First month of the year looks great.
  - Tom S. commented that the amount on line 504.111 “Professional Services” seems high. Carl explained this includes fees to Vanco, EFT fees, payroll service, the majority of the cost for insurance assessment of all church assets, budgeted funds for an audit and bookkeeping service. The audit and insurance assessment are one-year spikes.
  - Carl has put an option on the Vanco app on our website (Giving page) for the Italian dinner.  
MOTION: To accept the Treasurer’s report Tom S./ 2<sup>nd</sup>Bruce S. Passed with one abstention (from the Treasurer).
- Pastor’s Report—Rev. Kevin Downer
  - Planned Conversations on Wednesday evenings through Lent via Zoom (details in Share) where we can examine our values and beliefs to lead us to clarify our vision and mission, and what God is calling us to do. Rev. Kevin needs a team to work with him to facilitate these conversations. These first meetings will be samplers with a plan to go deeper into each of these areas in the future.
  - We need to review our current structures which are based on stability which has not existed since long before COVID. Plan to restructure ourselves and be ready for when we come out of this pandemic.
  - After discussions with Ted Bradley regarding the reduced demand for custodial services at this time, and the reduction of budgeted hours for custodial duties going forward, Ted decided to resign from his position as sexton.

- Virtual worship services are going very well. Facebook shows over 200 views per week and since establishing the Google business account, there have been over 1800 “searches” for our church on Google during January.
- “News Briefs”
  - Trustees: Carl Wisnosky
    - Trustees have hired a contractor, “Squeaky Clean Cleaning Service” (Denis Collette) for janitorial service. Carl will be auditing this service over the next few weeks. Please report any issues or cleaning needs to Carl. Cost is considerably less than what was budgeted for cleaning service this year.
    - Debby K. questioned who will handle our snow removal. As noted in the report submitted by the Trustees (see Addendum) other duties outlined in the Sexton job description such as minor repairs, managing contractors, etc. will be addressed by a 'Property Management Team' comprised of volunteers. Denis Collette does offer snow removal as well. Details are still be worked out by the Trustees.
    - Carl Wisnosky calls for appreciation of Carl Davis for the extensive paperwork he took care of for the PPP loan for last year and for the recently submitted application for this year.
  - Board of Outreach: Debby Kirk
    - The Southern New England Conference Super Saturday Event will be held March 13<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>. Including 54 great on-line workshops, only \$10 each. More info on the website <https://www.sneucc.org/events>
- Old Business
  - New More Inclusive Invitation Policy for Zoom Council Meetings: Bob Kirk
    - Bob has created a new email group to invite more members to Council meetings. Reminding us that all church members are welcome at Council meetings, all board and committee members are encouraged to attend. (Note: our Bylaws define who is allowed to vote at Council meetings.) If you do not want to be included in the email, let Bob know and he will “unsubscribe” you.
  - Rev. Kevin recommends that we add a page to our website for the Council meeting minutes and other updates. Then we would include only the meeting highlights in the Share.
  - Upcoming Fundraiser: Italian Dinner on Sat. March 6<sup>th</sup>: Charles Bottieri
    - 5-7 pm Take Out only. Vegetarian & Gluten-Free options. Additional option this year is a casserole to take and freeze for later. Also a new opportunity to purchase dinners and be a “Pasta Pal” at \$50 or \$100, will bring in more revenue and include chances to win a gift basket.
    - Tickets available from church office.
- New Business
  - Nominating Committee Update: Deb Kirk
    - There are three new appointed members in addition to those presented at the Annual meeting. Charles Bottieri will be the Trustee rep for Stewardship. Lisa Nowak will join the COVID Administrative Team. Debby Kirk will join Tom Singleton as Council Members at Large. MOTION to approve and thank these individuals, Carl Davis/ 2<sup>nd</sup>Paula Wilmot, passed unanimously.
  - 2021 Annual Meeting Critique and Follow-up:

- Charlene reflects that it was well done and that having reports online ahead of the meeting was very helpful.
  - Bruce L. praised Bob K. for his performance as moderator in handling unexpected issues that came up in a very reasoned and respectful way.
  - Bob K. pleased with attendance of 44 members and 2 friends.
  - Follow up regarding the motion not to accept the Music Committee report. (Note: motions at Annual meeting are not to approve the reports, but simply to “accept with appreciation”)
    - Jeff Perkins (as the Music committee) volunteered to rewrite the Music committee report. Rev. Kevin offered to help.
    - Sam points out the sensitivity of the situation and the confidential information involved.
    - Tom S. points out that the issue raised at the Annual meeting was with regard to the legal issue involved.
    - Rev. Kevin: Confirms that community is messy and lays out three steps we need to address:
      - ◆ What to do about the report itself
      - ◆ We need to create a communication that summarizes the timeline of events/facts, for Council to review. Trustees have already begun putting this timeline together.
      - ◆ We need to heal. We need to create a forum to work through this in the spirit of God’s grace and forgiveness.
    - Recommended that we need an ad hoc committee to address these three areas.
    - A concern was voiced that we need to include Ted’s perspective in this process.
  - MOTION to appoint an ad hoc committee [consisting of Rev. Kevin, Jim Nowak (Assistant Moderator), Jeff Perkins (Music Committee), and a Trustee, to be named] to make recommendations to Council for responding to the Music Committee’s Annual Report and to prepare a communication to the congregation to address the decisions that culminated in the resignation of the Music Director. Debby K/2<sup>nd</sup> Tom S. Passed unanimously.
- Adjournment: MOTION to adjourn meeting at 8:39pm Jeff /2<sup>nd</sup> Charlene, passed unanimously.  
Closing Prayer: Bruce S.

NEXT MEETING: Tuesday March 9, 2021 @ 7pm via Zoom

Submitted by Laura Bond, Clerk on February 10, 2021

-----