

First Congregational Church of Woodstock

MINUTES of COUNCIL MEETING (Not yet Approved)

Tuesday, Sept.14, 2021, at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom

In attendance: Rev. Dr. Kevin Downer, Bob Kirk (Moderator), Laura Bond, Carl Davis, Lynn Davis, Debby Kirk, Bruce Lyman, Alexandra (Sam) Lyman, Leilani Nixon, Jim Nowak, Karen Olah, Kathy Packard, Tom Singleton, Bruce Staehle, Charlene Swanson, Paula Wilmot

Welcome

- Moderator Bob Kirk opened the meeting at 7:03 pm.

Opening Devotion

- Rev. Kevin shared a reading from Wayne Muller's book, "How Then Shall We Live?"

Clerk's Report (Laura B.)

- The August minutes were shared via email for review by Council meeting attendees. Errors found included dates, a name misspelling, and wording of the motion for the Treasurer's Report which will be changed to "accept with appreciation" because it was only an oral report.
- MOTION: to approve August meeting minutes with corrections. Lynn D./2nd Sam L. Motion passed.

Treasurer's Report (Carl D.)

- Budget is looking good.
- Noted: Maintenance Line (505.104) may appear high but it includes cleaning services that were previously accounted for in the Sexton's Line (504.106).
- Tom Duggan will be covering while Carl & Lynn are away for a month.
- Sam L. shared appreciation for Carl's work in updating the church's brokerage account in order to accept a stock donation.
- MOTION: to accept the Treasurer's Report. Tom S./2nd Charlene S. Motion passed.

Pastor's Report (Rev. Kevin D.)

- Full report can be viewed on our website
- Deacons ask Council for approval to return hymnals to the pews. Carl D speaking on behalf of the Reopening Committee feels it is appropriate. MOTION: to return the hymnals and bibles to the pews. Carl D./2nd Tom S. Motion passed unanimously.
- Music Director job description in final draft, will be sent to council members for any input.
- Struggling to form the Vision Team, lack of energy on this is discouraging.

NEW BUSINESS

Conversation Regarding Our Church Structure

- Our world and our church have changed. Our current church structure needs to be updated.
- The Nominating Committee is unable to fill all the positions on boards and committees.

- Current requirement of an equal number of men and women on boards began when board positions were reserved for men only. (Outreach has not had men for a number of years.)
- Number of Deacons: Could we reduce the number from eight to six? This would create a 3 year term rather than 4 year commitment.
- Current bylaws restrict boards to church members only, should we change this?
- Jim N suggests a 2nd Hour informational meeting to discuss the Church Structure in order to bring more awareness and include more people in the discussion. He also suggests boards and committees evaluate their own changing needs and report back.
- Sam L suggests a property manager might alleviate some of the burdens of the Trustees.
- Tom S asks for examples of other churches' working structures to help us visualize different types of changes we might make.
- We have people who are willing to work on tasks but we are having difficulty finding volunteers to work on creating the ideas. Rev. Kevin points out that we are congregational and as such we need to be willing to engage in this kind of work also.
- MOTION: to form a task force to design a process whereby we can continue this conversation about changes to our church structure, to include scheduling a 2nd Hour. Charlene S/2nd Bruce S. Motion passed unanimously.
- Charlene, Bruce S and Bob K will meet tomorrow and discuss recruitment for this task force.

The Delta Variant and our Church's Masking Policy (Bob K)

- Our current policy: "If you are unvaccinated, always wear a mask. If you are vaccinated, wear a mask when singing or speaking to the congregation."
- The Delta Variant is much more contagious, vaccinated persons are experiencing "breakthrough" cases, and children under age 12 cannot yet be vaccinated.
- MOTION: Due to the Delta Variant, we recommend wearing masks inside the building regardless of vaccine status. Rev. Kevin/2nd Bruce S. Motion passed unanimously.
- Masks will be available at the entrance to the sanctuary.

OLD BUSINESS

Woodstock Fair Chicken BBQ

- John C. reported via text. We netted \$9,000; \$2,000 of which was in credit card purchases.

Arts & Crafts Fair, Oct. 16th & 17th (Karen O.)

- Karen had to leave early but left a message: "39 artists so far. Will food be for sale to vendors and the public?"
- Jim N reports: pre-orders and take-out will be available. (Chicken Salad, Ginger-Carrot Soup, Chili, Pulled Pork sandwiches, bottled water)
- Vendors are required to be vaccinated.

Christmas on the Hill (Deb K)

- Pre-order food, served at window

- Most tables will be outside. Masks will be worn inside.
- Online Silent Auction will occupy Harrison Hall for a couple of weeks.
- Deb will coordinate with Community Kitchen for setting up tables downstairs.

Stewardship (Paula)

- Timeline is finalized, on track for “opening day”

News Briefs

- Board and Committee reports are available on our website
- Trustees (Sam L)
 - Due to an appraisal done in January, our insurance cost has gone up nearly \$4,000 per year. The only way to reduce this is to increase the deductible which is now \$5,000 per claim. If we raise the deductible to \$25,000 it would reduce the premium by \$1,432.
 - Trustees are asking Council to think about whether we could introduce a resolution at the Annual Meeting in January to allow the Trustees to withdraw funding from the New Century Fund to cover that high deductible if we were to have a catastrophic event.
- Farewell to Lisa Haupt on Sept. 26th. Forward any celebration ideas to Rev. Kevin.
- Update on Noah’s Practicum - Rev. Kevin reports it appears extremely unlikely the school will allow him to do his work here.

Closing Prayer offered by Paula W.

Meeting Adjourned @ 8:45pm

Scribe: Laura Bond