

First Congregational Church of Woodstock

MINUTES of COUNCIL MEETING

Tuesday, Nov. 9, 2021, at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom

In attendance: Rev. Dr. Kevin Downer, Bob Kirk (Moderator), Laura Bond, Charles Bottieri, Suzanne Cimoichowski, Jennifer Duggan, Tom Duggan, Debby Kirk, Alexandra (Sam) Lyman, Bruce Lyman, Leilani Nixon, Jim Nowak, Kathy Packard, Tom Singleton, Bruce Staehle, Charlene Swanson, Paula Wilmot

Welcome

- Moderator Bob Kirk opened the meeting at 7:02 pm.

Opening Devotion

- Rev. Kevin shared Psalm 62:1-8 from “Psalms for Praying” by Nan Merrill, and from “The Cry of the Soul” by Dan Allender and Tremper Longman.

Clerk’s Report (Laura B)

- Minutes of last month’s meeting were shared via email. No amendments or corrections were suggested.
- MOTION: to accept the clerk’s report as written. Rev. Kevin/2nd Bruce S. Motion passed.

Communications (Bob K)

- Bob received an email from Ellen Bradley regarding her resignation from her position as Administrative Assistant. This email has been shared with church leaders but otherwise remains confidential as it is a personnel matter.
- Charlene received an email from Rev. Doe West in appreciation for having her preach on All Saints Day

Treasurer’s Report (Tom D filling in for Carl D)

- Donations income is tracking on budget
- Fundraising income is good compared to the budget, but not as good as pre-COVID
- Expenses are tracking with exception of salaries due to open positions
- MOTION: to accept the Treasurer’s Report. Charlene/2nd Sam. Motion passed.

Pastor’s Report (Rev. Kevin D)

- Full report can be viewed on our website
- 2nd Hour Conversation on Nov. 7th went very well.
 - Hopes, Concerns and Questions from people were very positive
 - Attendees felt this led to a better understanding of the issues
 - Report will be typed up and distributed
 - Rev. Kevin expressed his appreciation to all who contributed
- Office Management Coverage
 - Rev. Kevin and Sam are meeting to discuss short-term solutions as well as hiring steps

- Trustees have agreed to consider separating the finance and communications functions, keeping greater focus on communications for this position, and hopefully having a separate bookkeeper position.
- Reminder for everyone to keep up on communications and calendar events especially during this office transition

NEWS BRIEFS

- Outreach (Jen D)
 - TEEG Christmas tree with tags will be up the Sunday after Christmas on the Hill

OLD BUSINESS

- Stewardship (Paula W)
 - Continuing to collect pledges, working with the Treasurer to collect electronic information
 - Compared to last year, the number of donations appears to be over 66% at this point, and the amount of pledges is at about 88%.
- Christmas on the Hill (Deb K)
 - Tremendous generosity in donations
 - So far \$1,800 in pre-orders, 90 pot pies ordered
 - Publicity: Debby and Rev. Kevin did interview at WINY, over 800 Facebook post views
 - Still need a few more volunteers for Friday and Saturday
 - Lymans are picking up church mail and submitting any pre-order forms

NEW BUSINESS

- Deacons proposed Bylaws Amendments
 - Limit number of deacons to 6 instead of 8 (the Diaconate has been functioning with 7 for some time now) with three year term instead of four
 - Goal of gender diversified board, rather than requiring equal number of men and women
 - Deacons to serve no more than two successive terms
 - The Board of Deacons will elect two Senior Deacons each year for a one year term.
 - Changes to Bylaws would have to be voted on at the Annual Meeting
 - Rev. Kevin points out that we not only need to examine our Bylaws (structure), we need to establish and document our *policies and procedures* which will describe the requirements and expectations of our leaders.
 - Per our Bylaws: any proposed amendments must be “submitted in writing to members of the Congregation at least two Sundays preceding the meeting at which a vote on the amendments will be taken.”
 - Additional communication and discussion could be done in a 2nd Hour discussion and at “Lunch & Crunch”
 - MOTION from the Diaconate: Council affirms the proposed changes to the Bylaws as submitted by the Board of Deacons, which relate to the structure of the Diaconate, to

be submitted at the Annual Meeting in order to be voted on by the congregation.
Motion passed unanimously.

- Nominating Process (Deb K)
 - Thank you to all who are presently serving
 - Requesting suggestions for the coming year, the nominating committee will make contact with any nominees
 - If you are rotating off a board or committee please consider speaking with Bob or Deb regarding an assignment for next year.
- Date for Annual Meeting
 - Bylaws recommend 3rd Sunday of January which is a holiday weekend
 - MOTION: to move the Annual Meeting to the 4th Sunday of the month, January 23, 2022. Tom S/2nd Tom D. Motion passed unanimously.
- Next Council meeting: Zoom vs. In-Person
 - Majority prefer Zoom at this time, especially going into winter
 - Next meeting: Tuesday Dec. 14th @ 7pm via Zoom

Meeting Adjourned @ 8:16 pm

Closing Prayer/Closing Comments offered by Jim Nowak

Scribe: Laura Bond