

# **First Congregational Church of Woodstock**

## MINUTES of COUNCIL MEETING

Tuesday, April 5, 2022, at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom

In attendance: Rev. Dr. Kevin Downer, Jim Nowak (Moderator), Laura Bond, Charles Bottieri, Suzanne Cimochoowski, Jennifer Duggan, Tom Duggan, Bob Kirk, Debby Kirk, Leilani Nixon, Lisa Nowak, Kathy Packard, Debra Pallatto-Fontaine, Rick Singh, Tom Singleton, Bruce Staehle, Charlene Swanson, Paula Wilmot

### Welcome

- Moderator Jim Nowak opened the meeting at 7:01 pm.

### Opening Devotion

- Kathy Packard shared the poem, "Splinter From the Cross" along with a prayer.

### Clerk's Report (Laura B)

- Minutes of the February meeting were approved by Council as submitted.

### Treasurer's Report (Tom D)

- Standard monthly financials were not prepared due to the fact that this month's meeting is being held a week early.
- Tom shared a new format for displaying the financials each month.
  - The first page will have a narrative with the most important points.
  - Second page will have a high level one page summary of data showing how we're doing compared to budget in each of the main classifications of the ministries (without getting into too much detail).
  - Third page and beyond will show a more detailed breakdown.
  - Final pages will look like our old reports, showing line item details.
  - This new format utilizes a program that pulls the data from Quickbooks to create the report, which is less time consuming to prepare.

### Pastor's Report (Rev. Kevin D)

- Please read the full Pastor's report which can be viewed on our website.
- Upcoming Events: These events are on the Church Calendar on our website. Please be aware of these so as not to create schedule conflicts.
  - Four memorial services in April and May
  - Holy Week
  - Earth Day Intergenerational service
- 18-month Review of Pastor (The third 6-month review per the Call Agreement)
  - Congregants' responses were very positive.
  - Rev. Kevin's list of accomplishments in just 18 months is incredible.
  - Rev. Kevin's reflections on being asked, "How as a congregation could we support you better?" (See details in Pastor's Report on our website.)
    - Be conversation partners. Rev. Kevin encourages us all to let him know our thoughts and feelings about our church today, as well as moving forward.
    - Acknowledge and work together to engage grief, loss and change.

- Help deepen and broaden connection. Be proactive in communicating with Rev. Kevin. Connect with, and introduce Rev. Kevin to, inactive church members and others in the community.
- Rev. Kevin suggested moving the pastor's annual review from October to March. This is in discussion with the Senior Deacons as the situation is in flux with our restructuring.
- Review "Church Size Theory" (details in Pastor's Report)
  - Church structure needs to match church size. This is an important context to review as we look at our restructuring.

## News Briefs

- Restructuring Team (Bruce S)
  - Our governing structure is suited to a larger congregation.
  - Ten years prior to the start of the pandemic we averaged 100 adults at Sunday services.
  - Attendance slowly decreased to an average of 50 people at Sunday service prior to the pandemic.
  - Attendance since the start of the pandemic (when we have had in-person services) has averaged just over 40 people.
  - Our bylaws include 30 elected positions with another 50 positions in various committees, many of which no longer exist.
  - The Restructuring Team has been looking at other congregations and researching literature.
  - The team would like the structure of our governance to encourage people to get involved in the ministries that truly interest them.
  - The Team would like to have open conversations with congregants.
    - Planning coffee hour discussions, possibly Second Hour discussions.
    - Feel free to converse with any member of the team with your thoughts.  
(Restructuring Team Members: Bruce S, Debby K, Debbie P-F, Charlene S, Rev. Kevin)
- Supporting Ukrainian Students coming to the Academy (Rev. Kevin, Jen D )
  - Woodstock Academy may bring as many as 15 students from Ukraine.
  - The Academy is looking for our church to help coordinate with the wider community to support some of the students' needs. This would be more social rather than financial. This could include organizing community events that show support for the students, housing students during school breaks, providing activities for them during the summer, and being responsive to emerging needs.
  - We now have a page on our website that lists current needs and invites people to share their interest in assisting. The URL for the information page, which has links to the intake form and the Academy's giving page is:  
<http://firstchurchwoodstock.org/supporting-ukrainian-students/> (The direct link to the intake form is: <https://tinyurl.com/HelpWAUkrainianStudents>)
  - See the Pastor's Report for more information.
- Sharing Prayers and Celebrations (Jim N, moderator)
  - Tom Chase and family mourning the loss of Linda
  - Jesse Wilkinson's passing
  - The people of Ukraine

- John and Suzanne Cimochoowski's new grandchild

#### Old Business

- COVID protocols - expected to keep shifting
- Family Ministries Coordinator search update (Debby K)
  - Job description is complete.
  - Focusing on how we can welcome and support families with young children.
  - The coordinator will need the support of volunteers.
- Council's shared Google Drive - Individual boards and committees should upload their reports to this drive prior to the monthly Council meetings.

#### New Business

- Discussion of Rev. Kevin's Installation Service is on hold till next month.
- Opening and Closing Prayer volunteers are welcome. Please contact Jim.
  - May - Charlene
  - June - ?

Meeting Adjourned @8:20pm

Closing Prayer: Kathy Packard

*Scribe: Laura Bond*