

First Congregational Church of Woodstock

MINUTES of COUNCIL MEETING

Tuesday, June 14,, 2022, at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom

In attendance: Rev. Dr. Kevin Downer, Jim Nowak (Moderator), Laura Bond, Charles Bottieri, Suzanne Cimochowski, Jennifer Duggan, Tom Duggan, Kristen Kaiser, Leilani Nixon, Karen Olah, Kathy Packard, Debbie Pallatto-Fontaine, Rick Singh, Tom Singleton, Bruce Staehle, Charlene Swanson

Welcome

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

Opening Devotion

- Debbie P-F offered the opening prayer.

Clerk's Report (Laura B)

- Minutes of the May meeting, having been previously submitted in the Google Drive, were accepted with appreciation.

Treasurer's Report (Tom D)

- For details see FCCW Financial Statement for June.
- Income is over budget by \$3,200 from pledges and other contributions.
- Expenses are \$7,400 under budget. Most of this appears to be due to timing differences in spending that will resolve as the year progresses.
- Toby has been working on reconciling the off-budget/restricted accounts going back to 2015.
- The Trustees have agreed to proceed with researching the Employee Retention Tax Credit program in hopes of receiving a significant credit. Our payroll service will do most of the work for this.

Pastor's Report (Rev. Kevin D)

- Please read the full Pastor's report which can be viewed on our website.
- Staffing news:
 - Lisa is in the office Mondays and Wednesdays. To help her during this learning period it would be helpful to get items to her as soon as possible and be clear in what you are asking for.
 - Maria has decided to stay on. We are grateful to the Trustees for quickly addressing and resolving the issues. She will continue in the role of Music Director through at least June of 2023. She would be willing to step down if we find someone who is trained in choir directing and piano, who would be a better fit for us .
 - Heather is getting acclimated with help from Debby K. and Paula W. She is connecting with families and planning get-togethers this summer as well as

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planning for the fall.

- Rev. Kevin's Installation Service
 - The Installation is an acknowledgment, through a ritualized service where the pastor and the congregation join in ministry.
 - Due to the pandemic we did not have an Installation service when Rev. Kevin first joined us. Rev. Kevin asks, at this point, two years later, how might we be changed by this ritual? What are we hoping will be different? Are we having this service only for the sake of ritual?
 - Please share your thoughts with either Debby K. or Rev. Kevin.
- Questions Regarding Restructuring
 - What are you thinking and feeling about the restructuring process?
 - Do you want to be more involved in the decisions?
 - Are you waiting for the Restructuring Team to make decisions and then respond?
 - Are you wanting Rev. Kevin to make the decisions?
 - Please respond to the Restructuring Team with your thoughts. We would like these changes to be a collaborative effort from the congregation. You can respond through email to restructuring@firstchurchwoodstock.org

Old Business

- Fall Arts & Crafts Fair in October (Karen Olah)
 - Karen is resigning as chair of the Arts & Crafts Fair because they are moving to Florida in August.
 - Kristen Kaiser has agreed to take over for Karen.
 - Currently there are 26 artists and crafters signed up. Karen estimates we will have a total of 38-42 in October.
 - She has decreased the number of vendors inside the building for more room and better traffic flow.

News Briefs

- Restructuring Team (Charlene S)
 - The team feels a Single Board Governance model would be best for our church. There are many different ways a Single Board Governance can work. The restructuring team will present some examples over the next couple of months.
 - Debbie P-F presented a model of a Single Governing Board model which the Storrs Congregational Church has been using for about six years.
 - They are a larger church than we are and have eleven members on their Governing Board including the pastor (who is a "voice without a vote"). Candidates for the board are thoughtfully chosen by a "Leadership

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Discernment Team” who then bring their recommendations to the annual meeting for the congregation to vote on. This team also nominates the officers of the church (the treasurer, clerk, and historian) who serve for three years.

- The Leadership Discernment Team also chooses candidates for the diaconate. Storrs has over 35 deacons who can be called upon for various "deacon duties." Their term of duty is indefinite.
 - At the Board’s first meeting each year they elect a chairperson who leads their monthly meetings and serves as Moderator for all congregational meetings.
 - The Governing Board stewards the mission and purpose of the church, exercises visionary and fiduciary oversight of church resources, engages in strategic planning, and tends to the overall well-being of the church. The Board develops and implements policy but does not make all the decisions.
 - Church members have a voice and can present questions/concerns at the monthly meetings.
 - There are three committees within the Governing Board: Finance, Property and Personnel.
 - There are "Lead Ministry Teams" for the missions and values such as Outreach, Food Pantry, Building and Grounds, Worship (includes music, worship and faith formation), Congregational Life and Hospitality, Caring Ministry/Caring Connections. Coordinators of the Lead Ministry Teams are nominated by the Leadership Discernment Team in collaboration with the pastor, and are appointed by the Governing Board annually in July. These coordinators develop goals and strategies, plan budgets, recruit participants, coordinate activities, and report on accomplishments.
 - With this format the individual ministry teams have more autonomy to make day to day decisions, while the Governing Board maintains control over policy.
- Vision & Values (Jen D)
 - Continuing with small focus groups. Four groups (about 28 people) have met so far, three more are scheduled including one specifically for families.
 - Next step will be a church gathering for us to finalize our views on our values.
 - It is important to note that some attendees of these meetings have not been attending our services regularly and their input has been very helpful.
 - Prayers and Celebrations
 - Some recent cases of COVID were noted. Keep those with illness in our thoughts and prayers.
 - Tom C. could use support during this time after Linda’s passing.
 - Bev B. has found a day program for Earl two days a week. Prayers for their transition.
 - COVID Protocols
 - Protocols unchanged.
 - Be aware that the new variants are more contagious and don't seem to be deterred as

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easily by current vaccines and previous cases of COVID.

New Business

- Fire Marshal's Inspection (Trustees/Charles B)
 - Please see the addendum to these minutes.
 - We did fairly well with the exception of chalking doors open, especially fire doors in stairwells which must be kept closed to avoid rapid spread of fire. Some doors do not close well and need to be fixed.
 - Rule of thumb: If the door automatically closes then it's a fire door and should be kept closed.
 - We need to be aware of the habit of leaving folding chairs against walls, which can be a trip hazard and create a problem in an emergency.
- Volunteers for opening and closing prayers please contact Jim. Additionally, Rev. Kevin encourages individuals to focus on *us* being the leaders, especially during this time of change.

Closing Prayer: Debbie P-F

Meeting Adjourned @8:15pm

Scribe: Laura Bond

ADDENDUM:

July 8, 2022

From: Board of Trustees –

First Congregational Church of Woodstock CT

NOTICE

Subject: FIRE SAFETY – FIRE RATED DOORS MUST REMAIN CLOSED

On June 23, Woodstock's Fire Marshal conducted an inspection of our church facility. During the inspection, many doors to rooms and stairways were found held open with objects (wooden wedges) that would not allow the doors to close and latch as required by the fire code for stairways and certain rooms when not occupied.

The code requirement is to reduce the spread of smoke and fire by compartmentalizing a fire and keep it in check, allowing occupants to escape the

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building until the fire department can arrive based on having a fully operational fire alarm system with Central Station notification, which this church has invested in.

By having the doors held open, the spread of smoke and fire will be quick since it is not held to a certain area. The impact on the church from smoke and fire will be much greater if not a total loss by having these doors held open. The congregation has done an excellent job in investing in the required doors. Now, we need to do the same in protecting the church that everyone loves by keeping the doors closed.

A good rule of thumb is; if there is an automatic door closing device on the door, the door is to remain closed. (There is one exception to the rule; the double doors between the downstairs dining hall and the hallway to the restrooms and classrooms. These doors are equipped with magnetic door stops that are deactivated automatically, when the fire alarm system is activated.)

Please help protect our church building and the people who visit by following this simple but vital rule.