

First Congregational Church of Woodstock

MINUTES of COUNCIL MEETING

Tuesday, Aug. 9, 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, Bob Kirk, Debby Kirk, Christina Manuilow, Kathy Packard, Debbie Pallatto-Fontaine, Tom Singleton, Charlene Swanson

Welcome

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

Opening Devotion

- Deb K shared the video "Life Is So Beautiful, Life Is So Hard" from Kate Bowler, asking us to create more everyday empathy.

Clerk's Report (Laura B)

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

Treasurer's Report (Tom D)

- Trustees did not meet last month
- Budget is good. Income is over budget by about \$6,000 and expenses are below budget by about \$12,000.
- Toby has been working on reports for the restricted accounts which will now be shared monthly.
- Please see the Treasurer's Report for details.

Pastor's Report (Rev. Kevin D)

- Please read the full Pastor's report which can be viewed on our website.
- The Creative Worship Team would like to alter the beginning of the Sunday service by starting with the Welcome and Announcements, followed by reflective music before worship begins.
- We are looking to recruit young adult volunteers to help Heather with the children's ministry.
- Rev. Kevin proposes a Mission Based budgeting approach for 2023, developing annual ministry plans from each of the ministry groups.
 - Existing Boards, Teams and Committees will be encouraged to reflect on our mission statement.
 - Each group should present to the Trustees not just the amount of money they need but a prioritized list of budget needs, requests and wish lists, including ongoing items and growth ideas.
 - Trustees will establish templates for the ministry groups.
 - Prioritized lists will help the Trustees determine the budget and plan for the many

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competing priorities.

- Rev. Kevin recommends that the senior leaders of the boards and the moderator meet with the pastor on a quarterly basis to review goals and plans to improve communication and alleviate stress points due to competing priorities.
- Ongoing Migration to Google Workspace
 - We will be switching from Zoom to Google Meets. We will not be renewing the current Zoom subscription at the end of October. Google Meets is free.
 - Transitioning all Google Drives and accounts that were created individually, to the Google Workspace. New links will be sent out soon.

News Briefs

- Restructuring Team: Greendale Church's Model (Charlene S and Rev. Kevin)
 - The Greendale Church shifted to a Single Board Governance due to declining membership and an aging congregation.
 - They began discussions in 2018 and the transition process took place from April of 2019 through January 2020.
 - During the interim period all the existing senior leaders were invited to become the Interim Governing Board. In January 2020 the congregation elected the new Governing Board consisting of six members plus the pastor.
 - The Governing Board then chose moderator, assistant moderator, and treasurer. Members of the board became liaisons to the different teams and committees.
 - In this model the pastor is a voting member of the board unlike in the Storrs church. The pastor's primary role was to be facilitator and coordinator for meetings of all the ministry and missions teams.
 - The Governing Board met monthly and was responsible for:
 - Establishing policy and things related to governance (governance not management).
 - Making sure evaluations are done.
 - Responsible for stewarding the resources
 - Helping to ensure that the church is in line with the vision and mission of the congregation.
 - Managing and mitigating any risks to the congregation; evaluating how missions relate to the values of the congregation, and planning around any issues.
 - The process required a great deal of trust as well as an understanding that the plan would need to be incrementally modified as they went along.
 - The Restructuring Team would like to create and present one possible model for us.
 - What issues or questions would you like the team to address?
 - What responsibilities, tasks or policy pieces do you think the Governing Board should handle?

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- Rev. Kevin's Installation Service on Sunday, October 23, 2022 @3pm (Deb K)
 - There is a document outlining this event in the Council folder in Google.
 - Brief Sunday service that morning.
 - Contact the Deacons with any suggestions or questions.
- Christmas on the Hill (Deb K)
 - Modified like last year (some indoors, some outdoors)
 - 8 of 11 tables already have coordinators
 - Take-out food and pre-orders.
 - We need a new format for the on-line Silent Auction since Patrick Soucy of Golden Gavel has retired. We are looking at "Bidding Owl" which the 4H uses. We need help setting up the payment structure. Suzanne C. offered to help Deb with this.
 - Handmade in the "Quiet Corner" will move to the Fall Arts & Crafts Festival where the quality of those handmade items will be better understood and valued.
 - COTH coordinators are meeting Tue. Aug 16th via Zoom.
- Fall Arts & Crafts Fair in October
 - Karen Olah is meeting with Kristen Kaiser this week to "pass the torch".
- Music Ministry (message from Maria S)
 - Musicians will be rehearsing in August to prepare for Homecoming Sunday, Sept. 11th.

Old Business

- COVID protocol unchanged
 - Council will continue virtual meetings, changing from Zoom to Google Meets
 - Pros & Cons of virtual meetings: no traveling, especially in bad weather (it's green!), nuances of in-person interactions are missed, COVID is still a concern for many.

Closing Prayer: Debby K shared from Kate Bowler's website, "A Blessing For If You Happen to Be Having an Ordinary Day"

Meeting Adjourned @8:27 pm

Scribe: Laura Bond