

Church Council Minutes Union Church, February 24, 2014

Present: Jean Boyce (Clerk), Jenny Bromley (Mission), Shirley Carlberg (Treasurer), John Culp (Finance), Joan English (recorder), Carla Gilbert (Worship), Kent Gilbert (Pastor), Betty Hibler (CL&G), Merlin Kindel (Moderator), Dave Kobersmith (Church Admin), Rachel Small Stokes (Assoc. Pastor), Patti Smithson (Admin), Barb Taylor (FD)

Devotion: Carla led the devotional, a reading by several voices from Living the Question by Cynthia Langston Kirk. January minutes approved.

Minutes approved.

Financials Discussion of \$12,400 deficit for 2013. After discussion of line items which could be used to cover this amount, Shirley moved, Patti seconded to first deplete Unrestricted Carryover (6999) from prior years, then use Lambert funds (6060). Passed. Discussion followed on other encumbrances to Lambert Funds -- Solar panels for 2014 : \$3000 needed, \$2000 funded from Mission & Service funds. Solar Farm is not yet built, so panels are not yet available, we will wait and take steps when we can actually purchase panels. Where do we stand on Sanctuary Renovation funds (6315)? We have \$18,500 - or just over half. We will push ahead, but this project has taken a back seat at the moment.

Financial Strategies. Finance Board has been very diligent in helping understand what monies we'll need in upcoming years. Concern about deficit: they are looking at projections that indicate it's unlikely that increased membership alone will make up the gap. Deficit is at \$47,000 now, in 3-5 years it will look like \$65,000 per year, without taking into account any raises to staff. Difficult questions & considerations -- We don't want anything that's going well to fail.

Who/what will we have to cut?

We have spent our "cushion" on building

How do we move forward and grow

Money follows mission

How can we communicate the gravity of our financial challenge without fear

Kent and Rachel will "float" the idea of another all-church visioning process, including Board, house, wider-congregational meetings, at the Annual Meeting. The neighborhood meetings were affirmed as being very good for the spiritual life of the church.

John stressed the importance of having consensus, vision, to pull the focus in. Our financial strategy has to support something concrete.

Our pastors stressed the importance of a prayer campaign, as with the capital campaign.

The problem is solvable but needs work/prayer strategies. John brought this motion as Chair of the Finance Board: that the Church Council appoint a task force of a minimum of three people to review, support and report on the status of a financial plan for balancing possible deficits and budgeting process for 2015. One person to be appointed shall be a member of Church Council and function as liaison to Church Council. The Church Finance Board has primary responsibility to "administer the finances of the church, including submission of an annual budget to the congregation"; a successful financial plan for 2015 will require action of other elements of Union Church. Implementation of the motion shall be pending the approval of the Church Finance Board. Tabled for the moment.

Director of Music Ministries Search Committee: Carla reported that we are blessed with interim directors of the Choir (Gina Chamberlain through April) and Bells, Shirley Carlberg, and organist Rob Hayden (until position is filled). Church Council is asked to appoint a Search Committee composed of Carrie Jadud, Shirley Carlberg, Merry Kay Winter, Debbonnaire Kovacs, Chris McKenzie, a representative from Worship Board and both Pastors (ex officio). Betty moved, Jean seconded, that their appointment be approved. Passed.

The hope is to have someone(s) in place by May, we are not sure if we'll end up with one person, or up to 3, filling different parts of the position, depending on who applies.

Board Orientation: March 22, 9 – noon.

Lenten lunches will be from March 9 – April 6, Betty will assign Boards to weeks.

Safe Havens: We have a memo of understanding to review and approve. Admin has approved it after careful study – when there is a tornado WATCH issued, a team of volunteers will come here to church to staff shelter for 2-4 hours. 12 people have agreed to be trained to volunteer, it's a one-year commitment.

Carla moved, Jenny seconded, that we approve the Memo of Understanding. Passed.

Reports

Betty related Community Life & Growth's new member procedure – they'll have a 4th Sunday after-worship session for any who are interested in joining or have recently joined, and new members will be received on the 2nd Sundays of the month.

There are several people who are unable to join on Sunday mornings, due to work or other issues – is there another way to bring them into membership, to covenant with them, and they with us as a church? They are Jenny Hobson (been active about a year and a half), Dan Frilling (went on Back Bay trip and attends meditation group), and Teri VanPelt and Christine Ward (their daughter Kayleena is active in Youth Group) and Andy and Sue Blyth.

Carla moved, Betty seconded that we leave it in the hands of Rev. Rachel and the Moderator, with a member of Community Life & Growth as witness, to devise a way to accept the list of people as members, waiving public presentation. Passed.

Mission: Jenny reported that they feel Michelle's absence keenly, she has been so active and committed. Jessica is filling in as chair, for which all are grateful.

Dave Kobersmith: presented a mock-up of the Memorial Garden plaque, it has room for 44 names, we now have 18. Cost is \$2760, which will come from 6317, Memorial Garden Plaque, which has \$1269 currently. Betty moved, Jean seconded, that the remainder come from # 6998, Unrestricted Memorial Funds. Passed. Dave, Bill Stolte and Kent are authorized to proceed.

Rachel took some vacation time, and expressed awareness of the stress and loneliness in the congregation. While we pray for vision, we pray also for people. Kent commended her leadership while he was away.

Respectfully submitted,
Joan English