

Church Council Minutes Union Church, March 15, 2021

Present: Joan English (Recorder), Dave Kobersmith (Staff), Marty Hensley (Finance), Jennifer Melton (Worship), Carla Gilbert (church member), Kent Gilbert (Pastor), Kim Kobersmith (Nominating), Amy Schill (CL&G), Jean Boyce (Vice Moderator), Bob Boyce (Properties), Mary Lou Wiese (Nurture & Care), Linda Parsons (clerk), Lisa Vaughn (Admin), Betty Hibler (M&S), Shirley Carlberg (Bookkeeper), Paul Smithson (Moderator)

A quorum was present. Our devotional was poetry by Mary Lou Wiese and read by Jennifer Melton, February minutes approved with correction of an account number.

Finance Report. Shirley reported. January and February are rarely great income months, but we are doing ok. In 2020 we had a \$45,000 gift that was booked in January, so we had more income early in the year. This year, the PPP Grant will be accounted for in 12 segments. We will readjust the budget as necessary mid-year. Dave pointed out that we are doing a bit better this year than in '20, adjusted for the \$45,000 income anomaly.

For Discussion:

- **Stewart-Hindman Gift.** How to use this incredibly generous gift? Church Council needs to set philosophical direction. It's currently housed at the Bluegrass Community Foundation and its use has not been directed by the donor. Do we treat it as a one-time gift? Like Lambert Fund, use the proceeds divided as directed by our Financial Policy (4% to each of Worship & Arts Fund, Special Building Projects, Leadership Development Fund, CL&G, Mission & Service projects, 20% to Endowment, and the balance of \$300,000 directed by Council)? It can go to the Endowment (undesignated sleeve) at InFaith, with a likely 5% , approx.. \$25,000, per year return. It can all be spent. Is this a good time to talk about installing an elevator? Should we use the funds to pay off all current liabilities? As a comparison to Lambert Fund, which is approx.. \$700,000 - \$800,000, we receive about \$35,000 to use.

Discussion of requiring a \$500,000 investment in the Endowment sleeve before using it. That's our own recommendation, not set by InFaith, nor "in stone."

Question of whether we have any emergency needs we haven't been able to afford? No, but an elevator is always on our list.

Should we appoint a Task Force to explore these – and any other – ideas, which would report back to Church Council? Paul is available to help with that after end of May.

We seem to have 2 "big picture" thoughts:

- *all into Endowment, with the Financial Policy percentages added to budget
- * someone(s) to work with Kent and Dave to prioritize a list of wants

First thing to decide is whether we will treat this as a normal bequest under our Financial Policy OR we do not make the automatic disbursements.

Do we send back to Finance Board or an ad hoc body?

Can we alter the percentages given to the 5 Funds?

Paul made a motion to consider this as a special bequest and suspend "normal" disbursements under Financial Policy; and to ask Finance Board or its designees to consider its use. Finance Board will assemble an ad hoc committee, talk to each Board individually, report to Church Council in May then to wider congregation at our summer meeting (date not set – likely June or July). Let Shirley know if you'd like to be part of this.

Bob seconded. Motion passed.

Discussion of Endowment Committee terms – Finance & CC rep serve for one year; Treasurer continues through their term, congregation rep serves 3 years.

- **Members from Afar** We have not been able to welcome new members since March '20, but we know we have added folks – many of whom are very consistent in attendance and giving. Have we invited them to become members (no, no mechanism for doing that online)? Can our remote participants become members

and serve on Boards? What constitutes a quorum in these times? How do we report membership? Is it time for a reworking of our membership criteria? Question: why do we count members? Answer: required by our Constitution. And only members can serve as chairpersons of Boards, vote at congregational meetings. If we go from 100/150 members to 150/200 members, that has consequences for decision-making. How do we register votes when the constitution doesn't address remote voting? Response – if the constitution doesn't say you can't – you can. We may well need a Task Force to address this – action not taken at this meeting, but let's keep that in mind.

Can CL&G take on researching this for April – state laws regarding online vs. in-person attendance, voting? How do we welcome our remote viewers, how do they get pastoral care, is a quorum altered, what if membership online grows & those members do not attend meetings? Do we have (or need) a policy on voting at Zoom meetings? Our Bylaw #6 states “congregational action shall be taken by a majority vote of members present, assuming a quorum ...” Dave will attend a webinar addressing Covid issues (\$60 fee from Leadership & Development Fund).

- **Building Use** We will follow state guidelines for public events, based on CDC guidelines. We use a tool from Georgia tech regarding transmissibility. First Fall request is for the Berea College Celebration of Traditional Music in October – ok, depending on conditions, which Music Dept. understands

Board Updates:

- Admin – Lisa is taking over as chair, extends thanks to Ellen for seeing us through this difficult year
- CL&G – Game Night went well. They're hoping to be able to do some type of in-person event in April. They will share a post-event announcement
- FD – Maria and Kent are planning a distribution of Holy Week resources March 26 & 27. Chris and Maggie are doing a great job leading Youth Group, but it's getting hard – Zoom fatigue. They need outdoor activities and connection. Bok Group is now reading Witness by Ariel Burger
- Mission –contributed to Eastern KY flood relief, planning Offering of Letters, Interfaith Power & Light Climate Action Week April 16-26. Project honoring Michelle Tooley is going forward
- N&C – New class of Stephen Ministers will begin April 6 – Betsy Whaley, Tennant Kirk, Susie Ritchie, Doug Hindman, Hazel Morris – bringing the total to 18. Donna sent out 18 grief books in 2020. We've had 16 memorial services since closing the building to large groups
- Shirley reported for RITI- Creekside Lodge was host, maximum number of guests was 37 and they exceeded that almost every night. Families and children were housed, which was so very helpful. RITI helped over 100 people, and helped some folks get jobs, some permanent housing. Season ends March 31
- Properties – windows in the Community Room have brightened up the space tremendously. Dave is working on getting them painted. Question about drive/parking lot resurfacing. Dave will try to dovetail that with Berea College's plans – maybe we can “piggyback” on that
- Worship – looking forward to in-person worship. Making some very preliminary plans. Oddly, the success we have had in doing virtual worship is raising barriers to in-person worship
- Nominating – still seeking to fill a few positions, including Church Council Chair
- Pastor's report – planning for spring – continues to have an every-other-week clergy meeting with the governor. Spoke at a press conference on Breonna's law. Hired Rina Tanaka for video production, which will take some off Kent's plate. Kent reports still struggling with “long-haul” Covid symptoms. He anticipates a rush of weddings and memorial services soon – we need more people willing to serve as building hosts and AV crew. Prayer concerns – Richard Olson, Dale Brown. Special thanks to Jean Boyce, presiding over her final meeting, for her wonderful service as Church Council chair!!!

Kent prayed us out.

Next meeting April 19. Joan will offer the devotional. Funding requests will next be considered in May.

Joan English