

Church Council Notes Union Church, September 19, 2022

Present: Joan English (Recorder), Dave Kobersmith (Staff), Marty Hensley (Finance), Kent Gilbert (Pastor), Kim Kobersmith (Nominating), David Jones (Staff), Shirley Carlberg (Bookkeeper), Bob Boyce (Properties), Linda Parsons (Clerk), Carla Gilbert (M&S, Pastoral Associate), Donna Lovell (Admin), Betsy Whaley (CL&G), Joan Moore (FD), Jean Boyce (Moderator)

A quorum was present. Our devotional was offered by Linda from Mary Lou Wiese's book of poetry *I Only Come Here for the Music*. Question of the day – what goes with chocolate? Answers – pretty much everything. 🍫 🍫

Action Items

Minutes: Approval of August minutes. So moved by Betsy, seconded by Shirley. Approved.

Nomination Affirmations:

Nurture & Care – Carla Baumann

Faith Development – Maria Hartz

Affirmed by acclamation. Great news – all Board positions are filled!

Drake Memorial Fund MOTION: from Finance Board to use \$780 of the line item of \$5317 to fund extra water bottles for college students. Motion, coming from a Board, needs no second, passed unanimously.

Adopt revised COVID guidelines: Discussed and composed by our working group of Kent, Kim, Marty, Jennifer
COVID Guidelines, 22.09

Our goal is to make the updated guidance simple and ensure continuity of all church activities while empowering congregants to choose what makes them feel safe.

- Union Church recommends masks and will provide them at all building entrances.
- The sides of the sanctuary are set aside for those who would like to stay socially distant from their neighbors.
- Any group size limits and food service are up to the group using the space.
- We will ask all groups to disinfect surfaces after finishing their event.
- The balcony shall be closed to congregants when the county is in the red zone.
- The Church Council will review these guidelines as needed.

Questions & Discussion

- Will the choir be asked to move? Marty suggests yes, as there is a much wider dispersal of air/germs from the balcony, the choir should move to the floor. Kent will speak to Bernardo. This might have the silver lining of enabling those who can't do stairs to join.
- Balcony should be closed.
- Covid fatigue is very real.
- The Survey showed that about 30% of respondents have simply gotten out of the habit of attending church in-person, so the concern is that we are losing people We need to get folks back into the community
- These guidelines will be disseminated in the bulletin, website, Facebook, sent in Monday Announcements.
- Guidelines will not change every time the County changes color. Suggestion to remove color of risk from bulletin.

Moved by Marty, Linda second. New guidelines adopted unanimously. Kim will make an in-person announcement

Discussion

Finance Report. Shirley reported. We're about \$15,000 in the red & likely to end the year in the red. Discussion of Stewardship. Question - has there been further loss in the endowment? Up a bit in July, down a bit in August. Kent will address Stewardship in his Pastor's Report.

A/V Booth Update. Dave shared some photos. Initially \$40,000 was approved for the entire project, with \$5000 for booth. This will definitely go up as work continues. Jeff Hutton, Kelly Mehler, Denis Burton are working on construction. Cost may will go \$8-9,000 over the initial idea of \$5,000. The craftsmanship will be worth it. Bob – added the front is missing the molding, which is a slow process because the wood has to be slowly bent. There will be columns to mimic the front pulpit area. Jeff retrieved a butcher block table from the old Berea College Science Building at a cost of \$0)!

Shall we meet in person in October? Comments, questions? Kent reported we have a HEPA device that will increase safety by improving air flow. Carla reminded the group that we still have the OWL, which will allow us to have a hybrid meeting - some in the building & some in their homes, as people choose. We can also meet in the Community Room (no stairs, more space for air flow). Kim proposed we begin with a potluck for those who are comfortable. Agreed - we'll have a potluck at 5:30 and meet at 7:00 as usual, with the option to be in person OR on Zoom..

Coordination

Board Updates or Highlights

- Admin -
- CL&G – Lemonade in the Shade will go through October 9; then CL&G will evaluate. Maybe move to the Parlor for Coffee Hour, but it's a small space - we'd lose open space; the Community Room is much easier for service of food & drink with more room to spread out, BUT it's hard to get people to assemble again so far from the Sanctuary and stairs are an issue. They'll announce their decision. They're considering one Sunday a month meals. For October they'll plan a lunch to honor Confirmands after service and weave in a halloween theme with childrens activities &, costumes
- FD – the first College Student-led service went really well. David is spearheading & excited about that potential. He'll have at least 3 more meetings with Confirmands & do some education about other faiths
- Finance -
- M&S – planning to use the \$6000 (half from KCC and half matching from M&S Board) for Eastern Kentucky. Thrivent has a matching donation program for EKY: 2-for-1 dollars til Oct. 1. They're considering a Mission Trip to NOLA during Mardi Gras, to be of service in consultation with Rev. Ben Groth at Immanuel Baptist. Mission Bd made a Berea Home Village donation of \$500 in memory of Bill Stolte and the same to Room in the Inn. They gave \$800 to the Neon Library, terribly damaged in recent flooding. They continue to support Samuel's Kids, Nat'l Council of Churches; sending twice-a-year larger donations to them rather than several smaller amounts. They welcome suggestions for the Justice Candle honorees. Berea Home Village and Room in the Inn Fundraising Galas are both coming up.
- Nominating –
- N&C –
- Properties –
- Worship –
- Endowment -

Pastor's Report. The 4 college students from EKU who joined choir are very engaged, he's hoping that particular mission & ministry continues. Good news – his health continues to improve! He has a CPAP machine, which is very helpful. He's having more good/better days and dips are rarer & rarer. The church has had a lot of illness and deaths recently. Kent attended Bill Stolte's service in TN and shared that a March 4, 2023 Berea service is planned. While at Bill's service, he received the news that Mary Nash had died. Her service will be in Abingdon, VA, this Friday. Her family is planning to bring some ashes to the Memorial Garden. Her husband, David, was the first person whose ashes were interred there.

Stewardship. Very grateful for continuing gifts. He and Finance Board are changing how we do Stewardship -- instead of a one-batch stewardship campaign, in late October-early November, the plan is to ask people to become

recurring givers. Shifting language from pledging & tithing, which are not part of everyone's tradition. Recognizing first-time givers, regardless of amount is Step One. Then we invite one-time givers to become regular givers. The top 20% of our givers give 80% of the budget & that is not sustainable. As we move into the next year, Stewardship will continue. A springtime luncheon-picnic will be offered with planned giving as a focus – give to the church in a life insurance policy, and/or will. Charlie Hoffman has good knowledge of this.

The goal was originally set of raising endowment funds to 1 million in 2028. With the generous gift of Stewart-Hindman Fund, we are about halfway there. This money will grow and work into the future to support and sustain Union's mission and work. Churches have long (200 years +) been in the model that the families involved would support the work; this has not been a sustainable pattern. We need to broaden our base. Instead of 100 families giving 1000; we need 500 families giving 100 or 200 a year. Question - can people direct Memorial Gifts into Endowment? Yes, sure.

Worship – Mark Caldwell-Reiss' mother has passed and they will not be available for World Communion Sunday. Berea College Homecoming is on, in person for Nov. 18-20. Kent has invited the new Dean of Danforth Chapel, Lisette Wright, to preach. Christmas Concerts will be at Union as usual, at least at the moment. Is there handicap access to the balcony? Yes, Berea College purchased a wheelchair lift that climbs stairs.

Announcements

- Next scheduled consideration of Funding Requests – November, 2022
- Next Meeting October 17, Carla will offer devotional.

Bob – “our” Cansas Dowell will perform first Thursday of Oct at Arts Council open mic night!

Meeting ended at 8:15; Kent prayed us out.

Joan English