

Church Council Minutes Union Church, January 16, 2023

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

Dave offered our devotional from Book of Awakening – The Friction of Being Visible. Question of the evening: one word you are reflecting on in the new year: connect, balance, boring, change, bread-and-roses, rhythm, share, go deep inside, cleanup, insight, courage, duty, change, sorrow.

Sang happy birthday to Kent!

Action Items

Minutes: Approval of November minutes. Jean so moved; Carla seconded. Passed.

Annual Meeting date: March 19. Bob so moved, Shirley seconded. Passed

Affirm payment of \$400 from the Drake Memorial to 6606-Handbell Music & Support for 2023. Jennifer so moved; Carla seconded. Discussion & clarification - this dollar amount will support purchase of music or supplies. Passed.

Discussion

Finance Report – Shirley reported. We ended the year about \$17,000 in deficit. To cover this shortfall, Council is asked to approve the use of 2022 Lambert disbursement funds received over the summer, \$19,000 +. This recommendation comes from Finance Board and requires suspension of Financial Policy, which states that 10% goes to Endowment Fund and 20% is to be divided to each of the 5 Equity Funds). When it was received, Finance Board did anticipate it would be needed so it has not been spent nor that disbursement made.

If agreed to, after covering the deficit about \$1600+ will remain. Finance Board suggests we leave it in our Equity Fund, where it will be available if needed. Should we put that \$1600 into the Endowment Fund to grow? Either choice is a good use of that money. Discussion:

- It's a small but symbolic seed-planting for the future – an illustration that no matter how small a gift is, it makes a difference.
- Congregation has already approved all of the Lambert Fund for 2023 budget, so there will be 0 extra from that source.
- Should we wait until we hear about building repair expenses?

Kim suggested the 2 points be separated and voted upon.

- ⇒ Vote upon the suspension of the Financial Policy and using \$17,000 of the Lambert disbursement for 2022. Coming from a Board, the motion needs no second. Passed.
- ⇒ Question of the remaining \$1600+ from 2022 Lambert disbursement. Bob moved that it be placed in the Undesignated Sleeve of the Endowment Fund, Linda seconded. Passed.

Approve 2022 overspending in the Administration budget. Dave reminded the group that our Budget Policy says we can go up to 10% over on any area (except staff salaries) and we were over by 29%. In December we just had more (perfectly legitimate) Administration expenses than anticipated, which put the total Admin area budget at more than 10% over the budgeted amount. Church Council needs to approve that overage.

Discussion.

As a motion from a Board, no second required. Passed. Note: this expenditure was included in the \$17,000 deficit we discussed earlier

Flood update. Kent expressed great gratitude for the fast (nearly instant) community-wide response and how much “more bad” things could have been. Dave continued the report. We’ve had several firms in to assess -- HVAC company, carpet installers, ServePro, Dalmation Sprinkler. The sprinkler system is back up & running. The issue was -- 2 sprinkler heads were compromised. Their water line runs parallel to the ceiling & then the line drops 90 degrees to the heads. The trunk line shifted, allowed water in and it froze. A moisture content study was started a week & a half ago and that number has been going down, so we know the dehumidifier and fans have been doing their jobs. The plan is that Thursday ServePro will start taking the saturated insulation out of the Community Room ceiling, as the fear is that it will mold. Sanctuary cleanup will start Thursday as well. Who will do that? ServePro will do almost all of it. They constructed their estimate based on our insurance company’s software and projections. No estimate of damage yet. Should hear back from insurance Weds or Thurs.

Once the sanctuary is cleaned, it will be useable even if not 100% restored. The hope is that not later than Lent - Feb. 26 - we’ll be back in to the sanctuary.

100th year building celebration idea. Jennifer reported. Bringing this to Church Council for discussion/planning. Can we combine with a spring celebration/thank you for the help in saving our historic space, with all her creaks and groans? 2022 was also Kent’s 25th anniversary at Union and that celebration is overdue. Once we are back to “normal,” and Covid #s are down, maybe we can celebrate with a meal. Is there a logical Board/Group? Maybe different Boards, maybe some folks not on Boards. Anyone interested in a planning ad hoc group? Shirley is interested in helping. Carla too, and suggested Sue Peterson Blyth, Teri Mehler.

Bob Boyce knows our building’s history literally inside & out - but it’s an awkward time for them to commit. Maybe a CL&G member? Maybe the Mission Auction can be folded in. Bob made framed panels of church history that are now stored behind the organ. Donna & her husband John are both on the Board of the Madison County Historical Society and know researchers who would be willing to connect. Maybe each Board can take on a part. How many community events might have been held under our roof? That’s a big part of the history. Sharyn Mitchell, Berea College’s archivist has retired. The college archives has issues of the Berea Citizen but they are terribly fragile; they also house Union Church’s archives. Bob’s book; Dick Drake’s book expands social insights.

Need someone available to convene a group and invite, a cat-herder ☺ . Kim will convene a first meeting but not be chair.

Annual Reports due March 1.

Coordination

Berea Leadership Experience returns in 2023! It was started in 2017, in honor of Michelle Tooley’s life and work in peace & justice. Kim is a past director, Emily LaDoucer will direct and Lisa Caldwell-Reiss will be asst.

Board Updates or Highlights

- Admin -
- CL&G -
- FD –
- Finance -
- M&S – Auction will be rescheduled. Weekly Justice Candle honorees needed
- Nominating –
- N&C –
- Properties –
- Worship –

- Endowment -

Pastor's Report We've had about 50 a week in Cowan Chapel and many guests! Please greet them and reach out. The Chapel is very conducive to warmth. Planning for Lent. Looking at a variety of themes. Kent is going to NY for a week's vacation.

In our prayers -- Dorie Hubbard has been in the hospital; Charlie Hoffman has Covid; Reda Hutton still not recovered; David Jones recovering and holding him in prayer.

Next steps: concern from N&C and Stephen Ministers -- we need to beef up our immediate response team for driving, emergency food, collecting things. Looking at ways to formalize that & will report to Church Council, hopefully at Feb meeting. We need a team of people who come together once a week and divvy up concrete needs – kind of a service club or Voices for Caring. Simple & practical ideas.

Question of Bell repair – how funded? Shirley – the Equity Account for handbells. This refurbishment will not deplete that line item

Announcements

- Next scheduled consideration of Funding Requests – February, 2023
- Next Meeting February 20. Joan will do devotional

Meeting ended at 8:15pm; Kent prayed us out with a reflection upon MLK events – we need to look forward, not back. At the time, 70% of the US thought King was a danger to society. Ironically, we let kids out of schools that are forbidden to teach what King lived for. We give thanks for a building that shelters us and a faith that inspires us and the power of that faith that reminds us we are beloved children.

Joan English