

## Church Council Minutes Union Church, February 20, 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), Jean Boyce (Moderator), Shirley Carlberg (Bookkeeper), Linda Parsons (Clerk), David Jones (Staff), Donna Lovell (Admin), Jennifer Melton (Worship), Steve Bolster (PRB), Betsy Whaley (CL&G)

Joan offered our devotional from Book of Awakening – A Wider Horizon. Question of the evening: What’s your favorite Valentine’s Day sweet?

### Action Items

**Minutes:** Approval of January minutes. Shirley so moved; Carla seconded. Passed.

**Folks to serve on Nominating Board:** Laura Nagle & Jeff From Carla moved, Jean seconded. Elected unanimously and with thanks!

**Honorary Lifetime Deacons:** Gail Wolford and Charlie Hoffman were suggested – Kim will ask them if they’re willing.

**Staff Appreciation Proposal:** Steve Bolster reported on conversations the Pastoral Relations Board has had – both with and without Kent - regarding ways to thank our staff for their extra work after the flooding at church, and due to the years of Covid. They propose restoring the vacation days lost (The week between Christmas and New Year’s due to flood) and the gift of more vacation time, gift cards, recognition at congregational event/picnic, or some combination. It was affirmed that this additional vacation time is a one-time only occurrence and will not added to each person’s employment contract. Agreed that was a great idea and the staff was invited to leave while this was discussed. Admin Board and PRB will be in conversation and propose a plan at the next Church Council meeting. If gift cards are given, Finance Board will be consulted about where that money will come from.

We need to also honor our A/V crew, which pretty much kept us afloat for 2+ years.

Marty recommends Administration Board rethink the current use-it or lose-it policy for vacations – at some point, not as part of this conversation.

**Support for persons with calling to ministry.** Seth Hutchins is pursuing UCC ordination. He graduated from Berea College in ’08, has an M.Div. degree, and is currently a 2-year-contract Campus Minister. He would like to apply for UCC ordination, which his home church (US!) needs to endorse. Steve Bolster knows Seth well and stated he is a fine individual and a worthy candidate. Bob moves to go ahead with that endorsement; Steve seconds. Motion agreed to.

Our own Joseph Jacobs is applying for an internship, and that church would like Union’s endorsement. Joseph previously served as intern at Rev. Rachel Small Stokes’ church in Louisville. Kent is confident he is a good candidate. Jennifer moved to empower Kent to write a letter recommending Joseph, Carla seconded. Motion agreed to.

**Quarterly Funding Request:** Sanctuary lighting. The proposal is to replace 2 lights that shine on the pulpit area; and add 2. These would be moveable head LEDs 8-10 inches tall. They would pivot upon command so soloists would have light; and the orchestra can see their music. They’ll be in the plane of the current lighting and will greatly improve the visibility of those images on camera. Best guess – \$5,000-7,000. This improved lighting will allow soloists and musicians to see and be seen much better. As long as work is happening in the sanctuary scaffolding constructed, this may be a good time. There’s no hard bid yet. Should we go ahead and put energy into this, or should we pull back? Musicians spoke to the need for better light. Possible sources – Memorial Funds, Hutchins Fund, cash reserves. Reserves will be needed in the future BUT this will make the

building more useable and may increase revenue as our broadcast quality improves. Would it be ok to come back next month with a hard proposal? Bob affirmed the huge expense of scaffolding. There's also an option of a small lift being used since these lights are not very heavy. Bob would like Properties Board to have some discussions and review some \$\$ numbers. Can this be postponed until more conversations with contractor have happened? Yes, agreed, we should know more about current repairs plus add'l lighting at next Council meeting.

## Discussion

**Finance Report** – Shirley reported and invited all to look in the Google folder for 2022's full year, and '23's year-to-date, reports. We're already \$14,500 in the red. She reports that is significantly worse than past Januaries. Giving is down, pledged in particular. A fund has been set up for flood damage. We have received our first check toward that (in Feb). \$1000 insurance deductible, the large repairs should be covered.

**Flood Situation Update:** worship is back in the sanctuary. Dave has talked to 2 General Contractors and got a complete quote from one. The insurance company has by noon tomorrow (Feb. 21) to respond to that proposal. He's working toward having coffee in the Community Room Feb. 26; and the Stolte reception March 4.

**How to Count Membership:** Discussion of how to do so for the Clerk's Annual Report, as worshipping online and having few in-person events for nearly 3 years has hampered our ways of assessing our size. Some platforms count views, but not individuals. Joan and Linda will discuss. F1Go does have a group called "Voting Members," and several others that indicate various levels of engagement – but the Report does just require a count of Members.

**100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration June 4:** Community Event to celebrate 100 years of the building. Next planning meeting is Feb. 28. All are welcome to be part of that.

**Hamilton Family Foundation Request:** Bit of history – the Hamilton Family Foundation bequeathed \$100,000 to the church about 15 years ago in a cd and directed the interest to be used for building & maintenance. Now that we have a building maintenance sleeve at Thrivent, it would be beneficial to move it from a cd into that. Jean Boyce & Dave, acting on behalf of the church, have been trying to get in touch with a representative of that Foundation for months with a few contacts that went nowhere – and no resolution. Betsy felt that our due diligence has been done and suggests a final attempt by certified letter. Something like "if we don't hear by xx date, we will move forward." Kent researched and has info about a 3-year cd offering 3.2% interest, which is better than we're getting now if it comes to sticking with a cd. Donna reported that she has a contact for the Jeanne & Lawson Hamilton Family Foundation through Community School & advised Dave to talk to Kathy Ridge at the School Board office, 859- 986-8446.

**Annual Reports** due March 1.

## Coordination

### Board Updates or Highlights

- Admin -
- CL&G -
- FD –
- Finance -
- M&S –
- Nominating –
- N&C –

- PRB – preliminary report of survey. Early results are very strongly supportive. Most responses were above 4.5 of 5. They'll meet and talk about any issues identified and give a fuller/final report next meeting.
- Properties –
- Worship –
- Endowment -

**Pastor's Report:** We're moving into Lent – Ash Wednesday service will be in the Sanctuary so it can be broadcast and in person, drive-through ashes between 12-1. People are looking for low-key ways to connect. Maybe books studies, other groups. He fears we're losing touch with one another. We've got many sick folks, care needed. The world is seeming very heavy -- earthquake devastation, continuing Ukraine war. Our vision is big, our hearts and hopes are big but our budget is not. The grant-writing team is on the job, they're excited & skillful. The goal remains to get \$1 million into the endowment by 2028.

### **Announcements**

- Next scheduled consideration of Funding Requests – May, 2023
- Next Meeting March 20. Linda will do devotional

Meeting ended at 8:45 pm

Joan English