**Church Council Minutes Union Church, August 21, 2023**

**Present:** Joan English (Recorder), Dave Kobersmith (Staff), Kim Kobersmith (Vice Moderator), Marty Hensley (Finance), Kent Gilbert (Pastor), David Jones (Staff), Linda Parsons (Clerk), Diane Bailey (Worship), Jeff Hutton (Properties), Tennant Kirk (M&S), Charles Hoffman (Finance), Steve Gowler (Moderator), Steve Bolster (Pastoral Relations)

Charlie offered our devotional, a poem by William Blake, *The Poison Tree.* Introductions around the table.

**Question of the evening:** Someone who is/was important in your becoming part of Union Church?

**Action Items**

**Minutes:** Approval of July minutes. Charlie moved to approve, Donna seconded, minutes approved.

**Affirmed (with gratitude)** Eef Fontanez’ appointment to Administration Board.

**Discussion**

**Finance Report:** Charlie reported. July – relatively good month, only down $5000; and $27,700 for the year. Nothing new, money is simply coming in slower than it’s going out. About $167,000 in Sweep Account, of which $87,500 is Transformation Fund dollars from an anonymous donor in 2020. At the Aug 13 meeting, the membership approved the revised ‘23 budget with the deficit projection increased to slightly above $31,000. Do we anticipate later months will get better (esp. December, which is customarily a month with good income)? We just don’t know.

**Building Use Request:** Laura Nagle, church member & social worker, who works under a grant from UK, needs a small space for an office & space mostly for storage. She would be using 103 – the middle room between nursery & 101. FD and BLE have some things stored in it now that can move to the room formerly used as an infant nursery, now nearly empty. Last winter RITI used 103 for storage. We (and Laura) would work with them if they come back this winter. Right now, the next step is looking for the contract from UK, to see how much they’d be willing to pay for the space. We need to think through logistics. She would also use 101 once a week for a chunk of the day (10-3) for drop-ins, HIV testing, phone charging, coffee & donuts.

On the face of it, the group likes the idea – increase paid building usage is a concern & this use is in line with our hopes to be of service, AND generate some income.

Will shared use of space work? Yes, most likely, it has before (Stephen Ministers using 101 as a pass-thru during RITI as an example). Nobody was against pursuing the possibility.

**Grants Committee Report:** The group proposed a $302,000 grant and got $200,000 funded! The (anonymous) foundation asked us to revise plans of what we will fund in that circumstance, which Kent is preparing to run by the Committee first and submit to them. We may have a check by end of month. Discussion:

* Maybe ask congregation for special giving to make up the gap
* Jeff Hensley, Financial Consultant, has begun work (funded by this grant)
* Immediate financial plan is to be implemented this fall, and continue through next year
* Original grant had a $60,000 contingency for budget shortfall as we make that transition.
* Provides funding for kitchen support for Weds night suppers. Hope is to turn outward and have more people come into the building
* Based on advice we’ve already gotten, we have started data analytics of ALL of our financials – who is giving, when, how. New tool coming online.

How shall we communicate to the rest of the congregation? Dave reported a question from a church member who had a good question that let him make a very informative response - he’d like to circulate that, as it will likely answer others’ questions

**Budget Deficit Group:**  Kim. Let’s keep these items at front of mind for the next while --

 Grants Committee

 Fundraising Consultant

 Communicating to Congregation on August 13

 Increase Paid Building usage

 Increase membership and involvement

 Network with other rural progressive churches

 Reduce budget for 2024

**Coordination**

**Board Updates or Highlights**

* Building Celebration – each Board will be invited to set up a table to show people how they can become involved/offer info. They’re asking Properties Board to do tours
* Admin -
* CL&G -  David shared about Weds the 16th event. Went really well, thanks to all who helped set up/clean up/food. A lot of the crowd was visitors, lots of kids. Deb Beishline is cooking for Weds supper
* FD –  David and Pamela Chabora will be out front of the building Tuesday as students move in, greeting and giving gifts
* Finance -
* M&S – Auction Oct 25-29
* Nominating –
* N&C –
* PRB –
* Properties –
* Worship – Choir & Orchestra starting back on Thursdays
* CL&G –
* Endowment –

**Pastor’s Report:**  Kent has had Covid, and so do Jean and Bob Boyce. They are due to make their final move to Knoxville, TN, this week. Since they’re both ill, they promised to come back for a final blessing. Closing on their house this week. Kent and Tennant both went to Patsy Boyce’s service.

Work on the grant has taken much of the month. As we move forward, visibility in the community will be key. Looking to have something every month; and something to invite people to for the next month. Sept 24 is centennial of the sanctuary. Mayor Fraley will attend, hopefully Cynthia Nixon (incoming Berea College president). We have the worship service from 100 years ago and will recreate some of that in the morning service; we’ll have an afternoon event, tours, food. Music outside, tours inside, a short program.

Hoping to host First Christian Church for World Communion Sunday Oct. 1. What about a Blessing of the Animals after the worship service?

Several folks to keep in prayer. Doug Hindman has moved to hospice after several hospital visits for aspirating saliva, which simply cannot be fixed.

Looking for a new name for WNL – “Community Dinners,” Community Dinners PLUS,” ideas welcome. Something boring but descriptive is fine.

**Announcements**

* Next scheduled consideration of Funding Requests – November, 2023
* Next Meeting Sept. 18.  Steve Gowler will do devotional

 Meeting ended just before 8 with prayer by Rev. Kent. -- Joan English