**Church Council Minutes Union Church, November 20, 2023**

**Present:** Joan English (Recorder), Dave Kobersmith (Staff), Kim Kobersmith (Vice Moderator), Kent Gilbert (Pastor), David Jones (FD and CL&G Staff), Jeff Hutton (Properties), Charles Hoffman (Finance), Steve Gowler (Moderator), Betty Sarafin (CL&G), Carla Gilbert (M&S and Staff), Jennifer Melton (Worship), Steve Bolster Pastoral Relations), Linda Parsons (Clerk), Greg Lakes (Treasurer)

**Devotional** – Jennifer Melton read from Steven Charleston, an indigenous elder who combines his native culture & Christianity – *To All Who Are on the Fringe*.

**Question of the evening:** Favorite Thanksgiving side dish.

**Action Items**

**Minutes:** Approval of October minutes. Linda moved to approve, Steve Gowler seconded, minutes approved.

**Finance Report** Charlie reported. The September surplus of $8,000 reduced deficit. But now for October, we’re -$19,000. To both Charlie and Dave, it looks like a low income issue, not that we had high expenses. We’ve gotten in about 70% of pledged/expected income, but it should be closer over 80% at this point in the year. We have some givers who give large amounts in a quarter, or end of year, and that may yet happen. There is hope/prayer that it may resolve by year’s end. People usually estimate their giving accurately, so it may well come in. If that all comes in, we will be have a lesser ’23 deficit than we’d thought.

**2024 Budget Discussion**

* Pledges & Gifts, 4100. What might we expect? $307,000. Dave suggests we change it from $320,000. Total actual pledges received right now: $244,392
* Reminder that 4500, line 11, is the Lambert Fund. Leadership suggested 20% go to savings
* 4800 of assets released $16,000
* 6011.1 Youth Director compensation – gone down a bit, new Youth Director has less experience
* Assistant Youth Director – lower because she worked ½ of year
* 6017 – Video Production manager, came out of savings for ’23; it’s IN budget for ‘24
* Kitchen Manager – new position but paid for by $200,000 grant not budget
* 6500, CL&G asked for $10,500, an increase
* 6700 Mission went down from last year. Member-directed outreach is not technically $$ we budget. $19,200 from budget in ‘24
* Percentages – net operating revenue is the diff between projected revenue and budgeted expenses. Not included is the $16,000 from savings
* We can take out bell choir director – we have written a grant to Hamilton Family Foundation for that. We should hear in December
* Argument to be made to move Video Production manager & other staff person to grant funding. Transformation Fund is about $80,000 – we could lighten the burden by about that $16,000.
* What would we NOT be doing? Media campaign like NPR ads, who we are/where we are ($15-30,000) Equipment – lighting for sanctuary.
* Dave stresses we need to be sure of our line items in discussion.
* Adjust pledges & gifts? $307,500 may be more accurate.
* Another option – take the 20% that was going to savings, we can just leave it in the budget. Would add about $9000 to the income side. If we put the 20% back in the budget, the Boards will have access to the money w/o having to ask CC.
* Boards pared down budgets, knowing they can rely on the specialty designated funds.
* COLA calculated at 3.2%, which is what Social Security is giving. We can offer COLA at any amount we choose. Lower COLA = more money available for budget.

Suggestions/Decisions:

* Adjust 4100 to $310,000
* Eliminate COLA entirely for 2024
* As a Council, committed to looking at staffing levels next year
* #6500 CL&G Expense – Back to $2000 and encourage specific fundraising to finance the Open Table, potential of a grant coming through
* Gets deficit to $28,467 +
* All invited to express feelings re: this budget and the important, difficult decisions
* Heartened that we are going in the right direction, getting deficit into $20,000s. Seem to identify that staff is an area of concern
* Carla can contribute time be reducing what she is paid, happy to go down to $5000 instead of $6900; brings deficit to $26, 576
* Carla – if we make an appeal, it ought to be for the CL&G Open Table item
* We want congregation to know we are being responsible with their funds
* We rely on budget as a business plan, also discussion re staff; raising funds for Open Table, approving the work as well as the budget, education portion.
* What can we use that’s already at our disposal to generate funds? Building – large spaces unused, what ideas might people have to make money with it. More weddings, concerts, contacting real estate people & ask what they might see as rental potential. Playground + child care income. How do we “grow the pie?”
* Online auction – college sells surplus stuff, should we consider that? Have we got valuable things we can turn to $$
* How will the church be a better place without our staff?
* Vote to confirm this is the budget we will send to congregation, with caveat that if additional pledges come - things change? Agreed
* Staff was excused for a time for discussion

**Motion made by Charlie, seconded by Greg, to affirm 2024budget with the changes below. Passed.**

* Adjust #4100 to $310,000
* #6012 Bell Choir salary to $0
* #6013 & #6017 funded from Transformation Fund, $0 budget impact
* #4500 – Distribute 10% of Lambert Funds, making that total $40,276
* COLA eliminated
* #6500 CL&G – removed food from budget & will hope to cover with grants and special appeals, will use $1000 from Transformation Fund for advertising
* #6022 Carla offered to reduce her pay to $5,000 from $6,900
* Decisions regarding staffing levels/positions will happen in 2024, for the 2025 budget

**Congregational Budget Meeting** Dec. 6 Weds; 6:30

**Board Updates or Highlights**

* Admin -
* CL&G -
* FD –
* Finance -
* M&S –
* Nominating –
* N&C –
* PRB –
* Properties –
* Worship –  timing for Christmas eve – 10:45 morning service, 6 pm worship service withy reception to follow, 11 pm service – agreed. Rhonda Edwards would like to be on Worship Board. Affirmed by acclamation!!
* CL&G –
* Endowment –

**Pastor’s Report**

The spirit and energy in the last 2 weeks have been wonderful and encouraging. Youth Group growing; Open Table is expanding.

**Announcements**

* Next scheduled consideration of Funding Requests – February, 2024
* December meeting cancelled unless needed

 Meeting ended 9:15 with prayer by Rev. Kent.

Joan English