**Church Council Minutes Union Church, March 18, 2024**

**Present:** Joan English (Recorder), Dave Kobersmith (Staff), Kim Kobersmith (Vice Moderator), Jeff Hutton (Properties), Betsy Whaley (Moderator), Steve Bolster (Pastoral Relations), Joy Gritton (FD), Charles Hoffman (Finance & Endowment), David Jones (Program Coordinator, Staff), Carla Gilbert (Staff, Pastoral Support, M&S, N&C), Kent Gilbert (Pastor), Maureen Spencer (Clerk)

**Question of the evening:** What’s going on now at Union Church that makes you excited?

**Devotional** Steve Bolster, poem and meditation Bob Schneider retired Berea prof. Poem: *Jesus said Follow Me* by Dean Johnston. Meditation by Father Richard Rohrer (check sp) on resurrection.

**Action Items**

**Minutes:** Approval of April minutes. **Charlie moved to approve, Carla seconded, minutes approved.**

**Property Insurance:** the decision made via email, to accept the quote from Erie Insurance, needs to be formally approved. **Carla so moved, Steve seconded. Motion passed.**

**Board Member Appointment:** Joy Gritton has agreed to serve on Mission & Service Board. **Affirmed by acclamation!**

**Set date for Congregational Meeting.** The purchase of building insurance has increased the 2024 budget to the extent that we need a congregational meeting to approve that overage. Discussion of dates/times – options are right after service? Afternoon? Evening? Carla proposed 3 pm, and offer Zoom option. We’ve been having a summer budget meeting for several years and we’ve got a few other items (Dave’s health insurance line item for one, making a right-after-service option less ideal). **How about August 4? 3 pm – agreed.**

**Discussion**

**Finance Board:** Charlie reported. April report showed us down $5000, for May we’re down $44,000 – almost all insurance paid at once. Income is keeping up.

**Review of Conflict of Interest Policy** Church Council members are asked to sign this annually. It simply requests that Church Council members who are doing business with the church disclose that - both for the integrity of the Council; and fulfilling corporate requirements. Dave will email the Policy to everyone and they’re asked to read & sign.

**Clarify passed motion from November 2023** **Church Council minutes.** There was discussion of the yearly Lambert Fund distribution being adjusted from what is stated in our Financial Policy when staff had been excused to discuss compensation.

Financial Policy states that 20% of an Undesignated Bequest be distributed like so:

*4% in the Properties Board Project Fund, to be used by the Properties Board to develop special projects.*

*4% in the Leadership Development Fund, used by the Faith Development Board to empower church lay leadership in every area of church life by such means as workshops, retreats, outside speakers, etc.*

*4% in the Worship and Art Fund to be used by the Worship Board to provide sanctuary furnishings, interpretive art work, and other enrichments to worship and congregational life; and*

*4% in the Mission Outreach Fund to be used by the Mission Board to empower projects witnessing to social justice and peace, evangelism, and humanitarian relief.*

*4% in the Community Life and Growth Development Fund, to be used by the Community Life and Growth Board to develop special projects.*

*In addition, at least 20% is to be placed in the Endowment Fund.*

That portion of Nov. 2023 minutes’ fourth bullet point regarding budget changes: re: account #4501 says, “Distribute 10% of Lambert Funds, making that total $40,276” but there is no mention of how the 10% is to be distributed.

Dave asked what CC’s intention was regarding that 10%. Charlie recalled that the intent was to cut that distribution to 2% to each of the 5 Funds, and eliminate distribution to the Endowment Fund.

Charlie moved that we follow the will of CC at the Nov. ’23 meeting and distribute 10% of Lambert instead of 40—2% to each of the 5 funds and 0 to Endowment. **Steve seconded, motion passed.** Note: this decision is for the 2024 budget only, Financial Policy is in place as stated above, unless changed by CC and congregation.

**Director of Development Report from Kent, Jessi had hoped to attend but had a previous commitment.** They’re working on a number of projects:

* developing a Welcome Packet to new givers and new attenders as a thank you and encouragement.
* in August, the first of a couple of events re: estate planning & end of life issues. Strategies on how to leave the church a legacy.
* idea, needs fleshing out and further consideration - recognizing people who have the church in their estate plans, maybe creating a Mathilda Fee Society, honoring the education work and foundation of the Church -- is that a good way to honor the hard, sustaining work? Agreed it’s a good idea. Maybe the first group will be posthumously inducted. What about pre-endowment givers? Les Pross, Warren Lambert, Susan Hamilton (playground and office level windows paid for by her insurance policy). Sally Zimmerman’s estate planning will benefit the church as well.
* Kent & Jessi have been trying to amplify needs of church. Kent told the story of insurance to a UC friend, that person is making a $12,000 contribution to insurance.

**Coordination**

**Board Updates or Highlights**

* Admin -
* CL&G -  June 30 event at Kent & Diana’s - a Maypole & picnic. Deb will bring lawn games, Kent has a new fire pit. Fried & roasted chicken, and a vegan option will be provided, folks asked to bring sides & desserts. Sunday morning fellowship time will be outside for the most part. Suggestion that seating be provided on Sunday mornings. Agreed. God on the Quad Aug 18. Pool party July 31, 7-9. Do we want a cookout before hand? No, let’s bring food and invite people to bring what they want; or church provide limited snacks.
* FD - They’re doing lots of work on Nursery & kids’ needs. They have a potty chair but need an actual bathroom. Jeff reported that Prop Bd has made a scaled drawing. 3 toilets, 2 sinks can fit. Considering a shower. Dave & Jeff will be on a Task Force to produce a design, there will definitely be costs associated. Not sure how big the project would get. Maybe Cadence, Tennant Kirk, Katy Lashbrook can provide input. Going forward, the goal is making that space more welcoming and safer. Intergenerational exchanges & dialog planned, an opportunity to understand each others’ gifts and challenges. Story telling event? Welcoming those who’ve been hurt by church, experiences across generations, especially LGBTQ+. Plans for a fall kick-off August 7, giving away school supplies. Heather Dent will do a nature art quilt. Supplies from nature are going to be requested and there’ll be music, a meal.
* Finance -
* M&S - report of Mission trip to Brenda Richardson’s farm – Recovery Joy Center. Visited with the women who were part of the program, all were appreciative of opportunity to be creative and share fellowship. They hope to sell handmade items as a fundraiser and are tending the sheep on the farm, enjoying the benefits of working with animals. They hope to do more Mission trips.
* Nominating –
* N&C -Memory Café on June 25, 1:30 in the Community Room – persons w/ memory loss and their caregivers
* PRB – meeting next week to begin detailed planning about Kent’s upcoming sabbatical and Lilly proposal in preparation to report to congregation. Dodie has resigned & a replacement is needed.
* Properties -
* Worship -

**Pastor’s Report.** Rev.Kent has spent lots of time working on Planned Giving, getting Jessi oriented, which is going well. We will conclude with our Generis consultant’s contract year at the end of June.

We’ve got several folks in major transition – deaths, themselves or loved ones moving in to care. The congregation has been very loving to those moving on and their loved ones.

We are in very strange times in this country. The church is one of the few places where you can come where there are people committed to the common good, its erosion is frightening. Kent heard from a non-church member – but long-time Berea resident who’s relocated - who had a great feeling of Union Church’s place in the community. We were founded in “troublous times,” and we are there again. We have some of the answers people need. Working to improve worship experience online. A new camera that can show faces of congregation but will still retain the no-photo spot in the balcony.

Courtney, assistant youth director has left, did exit interview and discussed how to move forward with program. Probably seeing a small cost saving since she’s not here for the summer. Will be looking for adult volunteers. Youth Group is considering splitting off into Middle & High School division. A lot of our kids are bearing the trail of Covid experience, and will be for some while. Of the institutions that cannot fail children, the church is definitely one. We need to give them the spiritual strength to navigate fallout.

He's spoken to colleagues who have obtained Lilly grants. One congregation whose theme was “water” is having the whole congregation receive watercolor lessons. “Dream big” is Lilly’s advice.

**Announcements**

* Next scheduled consideration of Funding Requests – Aug, 2024
* Next meeting – July 15. Devotion: Dave Kobersmith

Meeting ended at 8:10 with prayer.

Joan English