

MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL PARISH COMMITTEE MEETING

October 18, 2023

Present: Lois Aldrich, Jim Bonnar, Steve Larrett, Jeff Giddings, Marc MacQueen, Viola Fairweather, Nicole Sykes, Rev. Peter Connolly

Guest: Kelly Lownds

Meeting called to order by Jim Bonnar at 6:30 p.m.

Reading provided by Rev. Peter Connolly. Minutes from the 9/20/23 PC meeting approved.

Reports:

Treasurer's Report: Marc MacQueen submitted the Treasurer's Report to the PC. The budget is in good shape; we are behind in fundraising, but several fundraising events are coming up. There should be no need to borrow from our investments. Funding for necessary building maintenance is a concern, as the Mary Fuller Fund is running low. This needs to be addressed. A more formal campaign to address the issue was suggested, something significant that could yield \$3,000 - \$5,000 annually to be used as the need arises.

Valerie Fontaine has been working on increasing church accessibility by having an accessible door installed at the Parish Hall entry. Estimated cost is \$6,000. Valerie has received \$4,000 from donors towards this project. The PC agreed to fund the remaining balance through the Mary Fuller Fund.

Building & Grounds: No new report. Rev. Peter participated in a walk-through of the church with Susie Sherman and other committee members. Susie pointed out four large historical chairs that she would like to see put to use in the church. Suggested requests related to Building & Grounds should be written up for PC review and final decision.

Public Relations: Rev. Peter Connolly submitted a report from the newly formed PR Committee. Members include Andrea Priest, Bet Giddings, Holly Begley, and Rev. Peter. The first meeting was held October 4. One of the main items the Committee would like to address in the near future is to bring outdoor signage up to modern standards that reflect our current church. The Committee is investigating the plausibility of replacing or supplementing the current sign display. All signs would benefit from proper lighting. The Committee is also in agreement that the path leading to the accessibility entrance needs to be better lit, even with the solar ground lights. Steve Larrett suggested that the floodlight on the front of the church, which had been turned off because of the security cameras, be re-activated, as security cameras are no longer functional. Rev. Peter will check with Susie on this matter. The PC agreed that lighting is a priority and will look into lighting for the pathway leading to the accessible entrance. The PR Committee will put together a budget for signage replacement once assessment is completed.

Social Justice Team (SJT): Lois Aldrich reported on recent SJT activities. Members of the SJT and other members of the church continue to offer their assistance to support the Haitian refugees currently housed at the Quality Inn in Middleboro. Bill Howe and Dody Adkins-Perry have been key coordinators of this effort.

Lois provided an update on the request from Middleboro Matters to have an educational seminar at our church on December 9. The goal of the Middleboro Matters coalition is to provide substance use prevention resources through education and increasing awareness, particularly with families and youth in Middleboro. Some members of the SJT plan to be present for the event and will offer to provide refreshments. This is a good opportunity for the church to partner with our community. The PC supports the request for the space and for waiver of the fee. It would also be good to publicize the event. Lois will send contact information to Rev. Peter for publicity once date and time are confirmed with Middleboro Matters.

The PC also approved the Rotary Club request to have a Peace Pole built on the church lawn in time for National Peace Week (June, 2024). However, replacement/updating of signage needs to be resolved first.

Music Committee: Reports submitted by Music Committee. The Music Committee is in the midst of planning for the Autumn Concert: In Memory of Avis Clay, which will be held at the church on November 19 at 3:00 p.m. There will also be a reception. Most of the performers are church members, but there will be some outside performers. The Avis Clay Fund is available to pay performers if needed. There will be no admission fee, but donations will be accepted.

Finance Committee: Bill Howe submitted a report to the PC from the newly re-organized Finance Committee, which now encompasses 5 related functions: Accounting; Investments; Stewardship; Budget Process, and Fundraising. Thanks go out to the many church members who have volunteered to participate on the church's finance team. Going forward, the Finance Committee

will meet monthly on the 2nd Thursday at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom. Several members of the team will provide the Ministerial Search Committee with their thinking about increasing the amount of compensation to be offered to the ministerial candidate (up to \$5,000).

Jim Bonnar mentioned that some people have expressed an interest in planning for fundraising events, but there is no chair at this point. Some ideas include a Service Auction and an event similar to "Men Who Cook, Women Who Sing."

RE: Kelly Lownds submitted the RE Report to the PC. RE is growing! New membership has brought in several new families; numbers vary each week, and space can be a challenge. We have 18 children total now. A critical need at this point is to have a 2nd babysitter for the twins. Kelly estimates an additional \$300 is needed for the RE budget to hire a 2nd sitter. The PC approved the request. Kelly is also looking to expand the RE volunteer group.

Another critical need is space for RE. Currently, the space is not sufficient, as the numbers of children have increased. The room is also used for coffee hour. The suggestion was made to hang drapes instead of using the current divider; drapes are more flexible and easier to maneuver. Another idea is to have children reunite with their families in the sanctuary just before announcements are made. Additional tables can then be set up for coffee hour after children go upstairs. The PC agreed to these suggestions.

Minister's Report: The Minister's Report was submitted and accepted. Rev. Peter had also previously submitted reports for May and June, which were not acknowledged in the June 21, 2023, meeting minutes but which the PC now accepts.

Parlor Committee: Jim Bonnar reported that the Committee is waiting for an estimate to repair the stained glass windows (~\$3,000). An "Avis Clay Parlor" brass plaque has also been ordered (\$400) and will be placed above the painting of Avis Clay in the Parlor. These expenditures will be covered through the Avis Clay Fund.

Minister's Agenda: Rev. Peter reported that many in the congregation have talked about the need to have a memorial service to honor and pay tribute to Bob Waterman. The tentative date has been set for November 16 at 7:30 p.m. The PC thought it important that the church contact the family first to run this by them as well as to invite family and friends to attend. Viola Fairweather said she will reach out to Deb Waterman regarding the service.

A discussion of ways to preserve the memory of Bob Waterman took place. Ideas offered include: framed photo recognizing contributions, put name on pew Bob used to sit in, rename the Parish Hall to the Bob Waterman Parish Hall. The discussion was tabled for the next PC meeting.

Rev. Peter worked 3 - 4 hours per day during the last 2 weeks in August and has requested one week off in January, 2024. Motion made and unanimously approved by the PC.

Rev. Peter informed the PC that he has met with Andrea Priest and Cindy Benard, who are working on drafting a Covenant for the congregation. The draft will be part of the "Unison Reading" during this Sunday's service. The congregation will be informed of the draft and will then have an opportunity to comment. The goal is to have a final draft over the next two weeks and possibly vote on the final draft at the November 5 congregation meeting.

Cash in the Plate: Contributions from the Cash in the Plate for November will go to the Matthew Mission.

Congregation Meeting November 5: A warrant was recently distributed through the *UU Updates* for the November 5 congregational meeting. One of the items the congregation is being asked to vote on is to increase the minister's package by \$5,000 (from \$89,000 to \$94,000). The package includes salary and housing, professional expenses, health insurance and/or supplement, life insurance, longterm disability insurance, dental insurance and funds directed to retirement. The proposed increase would be directed primarily towards salary and housing.

Another item to be voted on will be a Mission Statement. Having secured input from the congregation via the congregation survey, cottage meetings, and an open comment period on *UU Updates*, the sub-committee working on the Mission Statement will present a draft of several Mission Statements for review by the PC prior to the November 5 meeting. The PC will then decide on the final draft of the Mission Statement to be voted on at the Nov. 5 meeting.

Cottage Meetings: The Ministerial Search Committee has been holding Cottage Meetings to receive feedback from the congregation regarding the search for a new minister. The committee will meet on October 23 to review the information from the Cottage Meetings.

Book Review: PC members continue to read *Ministry and Church Governance* by Dan Hotchkiss and will meet November 1 at 6:30 p.m. via Zoom to discuss Chapters 3 - 5.

Meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m. Next PC meeting is November 15 in person at 6:30 p.m.

Submitted by Lois Aldrich, Parish Clerk