

PARISH COMMITTEE MEETING (Virtual)

December 20, 2023

Present: Lois Aldrich, Jim Bonnar, Stephen Larrett, Jeff Giddings, Marc MacQueen, Viola Fairweather, Rev. Peter Connolly
Meeting called to order by Jim Bonnar at 6:40 p.m.

Reading of our Mission Statement provided by Rev. Peter Connolly.

Minutes: 11/15/23 minutes approved as written.

Minister's Report: Report reviewed and approved.

Treasurer's Report: Marc MacQueen informed the PC that he recently needed to move \$10,000 from investment accounts to checking account to ensure payment of payroll. This was primarily due to reconciliation processes but also slow month for pledges. Many deposits have since been made to the checking account, and we are now caught up. Jeff Giddings distributed a graph of pledge payments for the first half of FY 23-24 showing that we are very close to our pledge goal. There are a handful of pledges that need to be pursued to meet our pledge goal. The investment funds that were withdrawn will be re-invested at the end of the fiscal year once all pledges are in and accounted for.

Music Report: Jim Bonnar will forward the report to the PC.

Social Justice Team: Lois Aldrich reported that minutes from the 12/14/23 social justice meeting are under review by the team and will be forwarded to the PC soon.

Religious Exploration: Report from RE for December was reviewed.

Building & Grounds (B & G): Report on hold as key committee members are not available. Marc reported that regular elevator maintenance has been completed and that stained glass work that was completed on one window needs to be redone. Jim Bonnar reported that \$20,000 from the Avis Clay Fund had been allocated to cover renovations of the Parlor, including the windows, and most of these funds have been spent.

Public Relations Committee: Rev. Peter Connolly reported that Public Relations has met several times and discussed the need for lights to illuminate signage on the front lawn (brown sign). It is especially difficult to see the sign at night. Alan Melchior suggested we look into getting solar lights to illuminate the sign. Cost would be around \$50. Jim Bonnar has access to a solar light and offered to do a test run to illuminate the brown sign.

Minister's Agenda:

-Rev. Peter informed the PC that he will not be available on 12/22 and 12/23 due to the death of a family member.

-Currently the church is closed on holidays. Rev. Peter asked the PC if the Office Administrator, who is not scheduled to work on Mondays, could have another day off when a holiday falls on a Monday, as most holidays do. The PC approved the request.

Policies and Procedures: The PC is in the process of reviewing church policies and making recommendations for changes, as appropriate. Policies will also need to include procedures as revisions are made. Rev. Peter emailed the PC changes he recommended to several policies and asked for PC feedback. The following policies were discussed:

- **Cancellation Policy:** Rev. Peter recommended including names of media outlets to be notified when church is closed due to inclement weather or other emergency. Lois Aldrich recommended that the policy be posted on the church's FB page. The PC approved the revised Cancellation Policy. Rev. Peter will finalize and also post in church Newsletter.
- **Rental of Church Facility:** Rev. Peter is reviewing the current written policy as well as the current written procedures governing rental of church facilities. Rev. Peter emailed recommended changes in procedures to the PC. The PC reviewed and recommended further changes:
 - Add length of time covered by rental fee (4 hours recommended) and charge per hour thereafter.
 - Add Office Administrator as the person in charge of fee schedule.
 - Ensure that someone from the church is on the premises when facility is rented.
 - Piano cannot be used without PC permission.
 - Rental of kitchen is not permitted.

- Review \$40 surcharge fee for sexton. This fee is the same regardless of time sexton needs to work. Should this be changed?
- Members receive a discount of 50%; non-members can petition the PC for a desired discount.
- Procedures require that the PC review the fee schedule annually. The PC will further review the fee schedule and procedures at the next PC meeting.
- UUA Contributions: The PC will decide each year the amount the church contributes to the UUA. Current policy will need to be revisited.
- Use of alcohol on church premises: Rev. Peter will forward the policy to Stephen Larrett, who agreed to review the policy and make recommendations for change, if any.
- Announcements: Worship Committee thinks guidelines or policies are not needed for announcements at the service but that a microphone must be used to make announcements and that all announcements need to be church related, not personal business. The congregation will be reminded of this prior to announcements. The PC agreed that a written policy is not needed at this time.

PC At Large Vacancy: At large position, formerly held by Nicole Sykes, remains vacant. Looking for someone to fill until the end of the fiscal year, at which time nominations will be taken for the next term (July 2024-June 30, 2026). Jim Bonnar will follow up with someone he thinks may be interested.

Treasurer Vacancy: The position of Treasurer will be vacant as of June 30, 2024. Jim Bonnar had a conversation with Dan Hotchkiss regarding ideas for recruiting someone for the Treasurer position. In addition to Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer, Jim proposed having a volunteer “financial manager” or similar position that could be responsible for writing checks and doing bookkeeping. This position would be appointed by the Board and not subject to term limits. Rev. Peter recommended that the Treasurer’s duties be revised to reflect the new understanding if this proposal is accepted.

Budget: The PC members agree Building and Grounds (B&G) is currently underfunded in the church’s budget and that we need to find a way to build the cost of maintenance and facility operations into the budget. Jim reported that the church has spent \$120,000 over the past 8 years in necessary maintenance and renovations. Generally, the church has handled major repairs in a “crisis management” fashion by responding to the need with a specific capital campaign to address the issue, such as the “I Love My Church” campaign.

The Finance Committee, B & G Committee, and the PC have had ongoing discussions on how to ensure that funding for building operations is more readily available. So far, the options appear to be: respond with another capital campaign or designate additional funds in the church’s budget specific for B & G maintenance and operations that will be available when needed to make needed repairs or renovations. The increase needed in the budget is estimated to be \$15,000 annually. To cover this additional funding in the budget, it was suggested we try to persuade members to increase their pledges from 10% to 15%.

The PC agreed input from the congregation on this matter is critical. Jim has drafted a letter which he will share with the congregation to seek their input. PC members suggested we offer congregation members the opportunity to meet with the PC with their concerns/feedback and that we include a package of information for members that is specific to this recommendation. Remind the congregation that they have recently approved a \$5000 increase in the new minister’s compensation package which also has to be covered in the budget, so the total needed to be added to the budget for 2024-25 is \$20,000.

Cash in the Plate: The Social Justice Team recommends the Minister’s Discretionary Fund for the Cash in the Plate for January, 2024. The PC agrees with this recommendation.

Agenda Items Tabled for Next Meeting:

- Membership Committee
- Covenant
- Social Justice Team trainings for spring -- Narcan and Stop the Bleed. The link for more information on Stop the Bleed: <https://www.stopthebleed.org/training/#:~:text=In%20a%20STOP%20THE%20BLEED,to%20correctly%20apply%20a%20tourniquet>.

Closing words provided by Rev. Peter.

Meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m. Next monthly meeting: January 17 at 6:30 p.m. in person

Submitted by Lois Aldrich, Parish Clerk