

**MINUTES OF THE  
PARISH COMMITTEE MEETING (virtual)  
April 17, 2024**

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

Guest: Kelly Lownds

Meeting called to order by Jim Bonnar at 6:36 p.m.

Opening Words: Rev. Peter Connolly read the church's Mission Statement.

Go Around

Consent Agenda:

- Minutes from 3/20/24 PC meeting accepted.
- Reports: The following reports were received and accepted:
  - Treasurer
  - RE
  - Social Justice (minutes)
  - Music
  - Minister

Discussion Agenda:

- Building & Grounds:
  - Jim Bonnar reported that the church's building insurer has determined parts of the roof to be out of compliance (on the Nickerson Ave. side). At this point it is not clear what the issues are and what the consequences would be if not fixed. Jim will keep the PC posted as the details become known.
  - A church member has brought to Jim's attention that none of the church's bathrooms are accessible. It was agreed that the unisex bathroom is the only bathroom that could be modified at a reasonable cost to become accessible. Alan Melchior is looking into the ADA requirements and assessing our options and will report back to the PC.
- Request for Funds: The Social Justice Team has requested \$100 to pay for stamps for the current Get Out the Vote postcard project. Marc MacQueen informed the PC that money could be made available, as the church will be receiving \$1400 from Sustainable Middleboro for payment of the church's role as its Fiscal Agent. The PC agreed to the request. Lois Aldrich will inform the Social Justice team. Thanks, PC!
- UUA Contribution: Jim informed the PC that the UUA is requesting a contribution of \$11,000 for next year. Jim let the UUA know that we have budgeted \$6,000 for the UUA contribution, but our budget is not final yet.
- Nominating Committee: The task group appointed by the PC (Bet Giddings and Dorine Levasseur) has completed its task and forwarded a slate of PC nominees to the PC. These candidates will be voted on at the Annual Meeting. The task group also drafted a document *How Do We Choose Our Parish Committee?* to educate the congregation on how the nomination process works. The PC approved the document for posting on the church's website.
- Annual Meeting: The PC scheduled this year's Annual Meeting for June 14, 2024 at 7:00 p.m. in the church's sanctuary. The Warrant must be issued by May 26. A draft will be presented for review at the next PC meeting (May 15). The main items will be the congregation's vote on the slate of PC nominees presented by the Nomination Committee, approval of the 2024-25 budget, and a proposal for a church covenant statement.

- Minister Request: Rev. Peter Connolly has received a request from two Seventh-Day Adventist Church ministers to use the church building on Saturdays between 9:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. The ministers will hold worship service and gathering afterwards for 30 of the Haitian refugees currently residing at the hotel in Middleboro. They would not be renting; the church would be donating the space. Our congregation has previously committed to do whatever we can to assist the refugees, but will this be too big an ask? Rev. Peter presented a summary of concerns to the PC that were expressed at the Social Justice Team's meeting two weeks ago. These include:
  - One or two people from the church will need to be present at the church when occupied. We will therefore need to have a list of 12 or so volunteers who can commit to being available as needed on Saturdays. A suggestion was made to have "shifts" of 3 to 4 hours and also to have a sign-up sheet.
  - If the kitchen is used, whoever will be using it will need to have proper training and certification. Rev. Peter will speak to Susan Hotchkiss about requirements/concerns around use of the kitchen.
  - Suggested that if we do go forward with this request that it be for a trial period of one month.
  - Church's liability coverage will most likely not cover this request. We may need rider or co-insurance added to our policy. Marc MacQueen offered to contact the church's insurance company to check this out (how to cover 30+ guests one day per week). He will need insurance contact information.
  - Jim Bonnar suggested that this is a social justice issue. Therefore, the Social Justice Team will need to generate enthusiasm in the congregation to make this work.
  - Use of other equipment (music, audio/video, etc.) is of concern. Piano is not available for use.
  - Overall, the PC felt an obligation to investigate this request and will revisit it once the above concerns are clarified.
- Policies and Procedures:
  - Policy folder #3 was on the agenda to discuss, but we will need to revisit it as Lois (Social Justice) and Marc (Finances) have not completed their reviews.
  - Decision was made to review Folder #5 (Jim - Building & Grounds) at May's meeting and to review Folder #4 (Stephen--Safety) at the June meeting.
  - Lois informed the PC that Andrea Priest had said that there is an agreement or policy in place for the Library Box that is on church lawn. Lois asked that Andrea send the policy to her, and Lois will share it with the PC.
- Church Newsletter: Rev. Peter had informed the PC of the need for the PC to decide on whether or not we need a newsletter, since all information can now be found on the church's website and/or in the UU Updates. Given the many new duties Val Ortelt has taken on, it has become too much work for Val to do in the space of her workweek.
 

After some discussion, the PC agreed to announce that we are considering discontinuing the newsletter, and we invite feedback from the congregation and especially from newsletter readers. The congregation will be informed as soon as possible of this matter via announcements at the church service, UU Updates, posts on the website, one-on-one contact for those who are currently receiving hardcopies of the newsletter, and on the first page of the newsletters published in May and June.

  - Locked file cabinet: Stephen Larrett will contact Val to order a 3-drawer locked vertical cabinet that he found on Amazon.

**Next Governance Meeting: May 1 at 6:30 in Parish Hall.** Review of the organizational chart and discussion of committees and reports.

**Next PC Meeting: May 15 at 6:30 (in person).** (Please note that Lois Aldrich will be away for month of May).

Meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Submitted by Lois Aldrich