

**MINUTES OF THE  
PARISH COMMITTEE MEETING  
November 20, 2024**

**Present:** Diane Reed, Rev. Beau Rivers, Stephen Larrett, Jeff Giddings, Vi Fairweather, Jim Bonnar, Nancy Backus, Lois Aldrich

**Guests:** Kelly Lownds (RE), Alan Melchior (Building & Grounds), Norm Grenier (Finance Committee)

Meeting called to order by Jeff Giddings at 6:35 p.m.

Check-in

Opening words read by Rev. Beau Rivers.

Discussion Items

- **Building Preservation Project:** Alan Melchior distributed a “Draft Plan for Exterior Repairs” to meeting participants for their review and comment. The plan addresses concerns raised by the Church’s insurance company, Church Mutual, as well as other major building repairs that are needed due to aging of the building. Church Mutual has informed the church that the required repairs they cited must be completed or FUUSM risks losing insurance for the building.

The plan proposes that repairs occur in 3 phases over a 3-year period (2024-2027). This would also allow funding to be staggered over the 3-year period. Alan has worked with Church Mutual to develop the plan and has also met with Paul Macuch to develop preliminary cost estimates. (Many thanks, Alan!!) Preliminary estimate to complete all needed work during the 3-year period is \$155,435 - \$190,170. Alan recommends the “heavy duty work” occur in years 2 and 3, and the “easier” (and less costly) tasks be completed in the first year, which will allow more time for the church to raise the funds.

The Finance Committee has been meeting to review funding options. Norm Grenier spoke to the PC about the Finance Committee’s ideas for a Fund Drive to pay for this project. Norm and Rick Benard have volunteered to co-chair fundraising efforts. Norm conducted a small “feasibility” study with several people in the congregation and believes this will be a doable project. It is important how we engage the congregation in this activity. Congregation members are the “shareholders” of our church, which Norm described as “a house of our values.” All agreed it is important to immediately move forward with this project, as we want to be sure this project is kept very separate from the Annual Pledge Drive, which will begin late March, early April in 2025.

Our job is to develop a coordinated messaging effort between Building and Grounds, the Fund Drive, the PC, the minister, PR, and the congregation. Norm recommends we start with a joint letter from Rev. Beau Rivers and Jeff Giddings to the congregation describing this project. Jeff has already written a summary for the December newsletter. Rev. Beau is working on a Sunday service with the theme of “the Spirit of Generosity.” She suggests a pot luck be held afterwards to “kick off” the project, at which time the congregation can hear more details of the plan, ask questions, and even have a tour of the sites in need of repair. Alan Melchior is developing a power point presentation that will provide more details. Alan said that Bill Howe from the Finance Committee is developing a handout that will help people to better understand the options for giving, including IRA and tax

deductions. The PC agreed to schedule a date for the service, pot luck, and project “kick-off”. The date will be **Sunday, December 15**.

Vi Fairweather made a motion to approve moving forward with the Building Preservation Project as proposed in Alan’s draft. Motion seconded and approved by the PC.

- **Committees:** The PC discussed the work that needs to be done with Committees and Teams. Jeff Giddings explained the main objective is to enhance communication between the PC, Committees and Teams, and the Congregation. Some Committees and Teams do not appear to be sure of their relationship among the various church stakeholders.

Several ideas were proposed that would help achieve these objectives:

- Develop a Handbook for Committee and Team leaders that would help them meet their goals. Jeff Giddings, Vi Fairweather, Nancy Backus and Kelly Lownds volunteered to work on this task over the next few weeks. Stephen Larrett suggested that any work on the Handbook be done electronically and stored on a shared drive, accessible to all who need it. (The PC agreed that we continue to need to streamline storage electronically and decide how and where to archive records.)
  - Coordinate an informational meeting/retreat for Committee and team leaders.
  - Obtain an annual budget from each Committee and team.
  - Clarify who Committees and Teams report to.
  - Clarify the responsibilities of Committees and Teams with respect to record keeping and submission of reports (as appropriate).
  - Work with Committees and Teams to develop any needed policies and procedures.
  - Work with Committees to develop a charter, if not already in place.
  - Once the above work is completed, we will coordinate a Committee Fair and share this information with all congregation members and possibly recruit more members for the Committees and Teams!
- **Cottage Meetings:** Rev. Beau provided an update on the Cottage Meetings. All meetings have been completed. Rev. Beau is planning to meet with 2 members who are unable to attend the meetings at the church. Jeff Giddings provided the PC with a copy of the notes from each of the meetings. Next steps are to recruit a team to review, analyze, and summarize comments from the meetings. The Committee on Ministry has offered to take a look at the notes and see what the common themes appear to be and come up with the top 5 or 6 areas. To obtain input from the congregation as to what areas the church will focus on in the coming years, congregation members will be able to place a sticker on what themes most interest them.
  - **FY 26 Budget:** Jeff Giddings emailed the PC the first draft of the FY 26-27 budget. The PC agreed there appears to be a few changes from this year’s budget (Building Preservation Project not included). The Social Justice Team requested \$1000 for next year’s budget, which the PC approved.

Stephen Larrett informed the PC that he has researched Breeze Church Management software and found out that Breeze does not do Newsletters, which was one of the tasks we were hoping they could do. Basically, Breeze automates the distribution of information. Need to explore further to see how much it can actually help us with and how it can reduce current workload in the office. Stephen reminded us that our church has an archaic computer system that needs to be updated. Increased memory, internet speed, updated software, increased storage, updated phone system... all are needed if we move forward with electronic storage and archiving of records and documents. Estimate coast would be ≈ \$2000.

- **Social Justice Team Charter:** Motion moved to accept SJT charter and accepted unanimously. It was mentioned that Building and Grounds and PR also have developed good charters, which may be shared with other Committees as a tool to develop their charters.

Other Business:

- Approval of PC Meeting Minutes will be done via email each month and will no longer be an agenda item.
- Office Coverage: Jeff and Rev. Beau will discuss.
- New Year's PC slate of officers: We will need to appoint a Nominating Committee to move this forward for nominations at the 2025 Annual Meeting.
- Diane Reed raised the concern of using our personal emails for church business. The issue is that the church has a limited number of email addresses available. Every Committee should have an email address for its committee or team. Further discussion needed.
- Stephen Larrett has developed or revised many church Policies/Procedures and has forwarded to the PC for review (Thank you, Stephen!). The PC members should review and get back to Stephen via email with any comments/questions.

Next PC Meeting: December 18, 2024, at 6:30 p.m. in Parish Hall

Meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.