

Minutes
Little Home Church Council Meeting
July 8, 2014

In Attendance: Sandy Antonelli, Anne Bouchard, Kathy Haben, Jan Marchese, Ann McLaughlin, Kathleen Sullivan Kaska, Bob Kaska, Susi Winqvist, Maureen O'Donnell, David Russell, Susannah Lesswing, Jane Shelton, Carol Berger, Art Zemke, Alex Kentfield

Absent: Valeri Baldwin, Dan Roach

Moderator Kathy Haben began the meeting at 7:01 p.m. She welcomed the interim Pastor, Rev. Dr. David Russell, to the council.

Joys and concerns were shared. Pastor David Russell then gave the opening prayer.

Approval of Minutes: Corrections were made to the minutes. Sandy Antonelli moved to approve the minutes seconded by Susannah. Motion passed with corrections. Jan Marchese will correct the June minutes.

Treasurer's Report:

Art remarked that we are currently at the half way mark of the year and we are lagging behind in income in spite of June being a strong month compared to this May. The total operating receipts YTD of \$119,875 was 51.01% of the Total Receipts Budget for 2014 of \$235,000. It is just a little behind the three year average of 53.66%. However, the YTD income is behind last year. This shortfall is being offset by under spending of budgeted expenses. Each committee chair was urged to look at their spending and to continue spending less than their budget if possible.. Overall, our financial position of \$204,321 is better than last June (\$105,968) and last December (\$74,768) due to the sale of the Peterson house. Art asked the council to consider transferring money from the Peterson House account to the operating fund.

The Dixon house will be put on the market tomorrow for \$89,000. The parcel of land behind the property was going to be sold to the residents that reside behind the Dixon House for \$4000. However, because of an issue with the septic lines, the parcel could not be sold and will remain as part of the Dixon House property. The listing price of the Dixon property was raised \$4000 to \$89,000 as a result.

Art also presented an Operating Budget deficit projection through 2017 if income/spending trends continue. If the proceeds from the property sales are utilized to offset the projected operating deficits, LHC would drain those monies. Use of Peterson Property proceeds to cure the projected deficit would require a congregational vote as an agenda item at the Janual meeting. Increasing membership/pledges is necessary to offset the projected shortfall of \$80,000 in 2017. There are no additional properties to sell.

Art also mentioned the use of the Memorial Fund to cover various expenses. It was explained that the memorial money could only be spent with the approval of the family members and the Memorial Fund Committee. The Memorial Fund Committee currently does not exist.

Jane Shelton moved to approve the treasurer's report. Seconded by Jan Marchese, Motion passed.

Pastor's Report:

Pastor David started his report with a passage from the Bible. He expressed his enthusiasm to help us with the process of finding a new pastor and hopes to provide assistance and guidance during the process.

He also spoke about the new Beginnings Program Assessment Service, which he is urging the church to consider. The program prepares a comprehensive report of the church's strengths and challenges and provides training to help members and leaders make decisions for the future. He would like a group of at least five people to attend an informational session that will be held on August 16, 2014, 10:00 am, at the church offices, 1840 Westchester Blvd. Suite 200. Bob Kaska inquired about the use of this program in the area. Because it is such a new program, no churches in the area have used this program. However the August meeting will determine our interest in the program. The cost of the program is \$2800-\$3500.

Kathy Haben and David attended the UCC conference meeting on June 15th. Topics of discussion included revitalization of UCC churches due to across the board membership decline; social justice resolutions under study: typhoon victims, immigration, etc.

David noted to the council that there were no staff guidelines or job descriptions. Kathy confirmed that job descriptions do exist and that Larry does have a contract. David suggested that the personnel committee reviews those descriptions. This committee consists of the Moderator, Past Moderator, and two general members.

David mentioned he has two weddings scheduled for August. He remarked that our wedding fees are outdated. Larry has recently increased his fee. David will review the Pastor, custodian and church rental fees and will bring his recommendation for increases to the August meeting.

Pastor David can be reached at pastordavid@littlehomechurch.org when his computer is up and running. Until that time he can be reached via the office; cell phone; or personal email address.

Past Moderator's Report:

Kathy and Susi conducted an exit interview with Pastor Ron Purser in which a report will be forwarded to Jonathan Knight at the FVA. During the interview, Ron had commented that the demographics of Wayne are changing. It has gone from mostly a Protestant community to one that is now more Catholic.

Kathy Haben suggested that we purchase a demographics report for \$15 for church use. Anne B. made a motion to purchase the report, Susannah seconded it. Discussion followed as to the different ways the report could be used. Motion passed.

Kathy also distributed a list of items that were made during a meeting she conducted in April, titled "What's on Your Mind, What's in your Heart." The meeting, a SWOT analysis, gathered information from the congregation as to what they felt our Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats are. This will be useful for use as we move forward defining where we have been, where we are, and where we are going.

She also reported that we had no quorum at the Junual meeting. The approval of the church council, which must be done at the Junual meeting, will be sent out by electronic mail to church members for approval.

As a result of the “no quorum” we may want to revise our bylaws regarding the 20% rule which kept the church from conducting and finalizing business. She also recommended that we have another culling of the membership directory of our church to firm up a more accurate count. Kathy suggested that an ad hock committee be formed to tackle this project. Such a committee could include evangelism, the financial secretary, moderator and moderator elect. The moderator may add other members as needed.

The Search and Call Committee has not been formed yet. Once Pastor David has settled in, the committee can be formed.

Bob suggested that we have the church membership list in Church Windows so that we can review the list. Discussion followed regarding adding an “in active member” category in Church Windows. Susi W. reviewed the bylaws and determined that such a member status would be in line with the bylaws. The council felt that the category should be used in determining more realistic and practical quorum numbers.

Kathy also led the discussion as to who would be responsible for opening and locking up the church before and after church. Discussion followed regarding using ushers, which change regularly and are not always consistent. Pastor David said that he will usually be here early and opening the church should not be a problem. Kristen Thornton suggested that each council member be responsible for a number of dates throughout the year rather than asking the ushers to be responsible. Anne moved that the council takes on the responsibility of opening and closing down the church. Kathleen seconded the motion. Motion passed. One no vote. Susi will be forwarding a signup sheet to the council. Each council member will need to be responsible for securing the church approximately four times in a year. There will be a review of the locking up procedure at the next council meeting.

Bob wanted to know if we should discontinue the AV. Discussion was not favorable of removing the AV so the recording of the services will continue. There was discussion regarding adding the video to the website or Facebook. Kathleen will look into this. There was concern that Larry was not content with the quality of the video. However, the council felt that having the videos, regardless of quality, were better than none.

Moderator Elect Report:

Susi reported that Alex Kentfield accepted the position of Moderator Elect for 2014-15.

She also forwarded around a complete list of all of the committees and their contact information for the council to review and check for mistakes.

Susi questioned about the status of the Sunday morning babysitter for the summer. Maureen will follow up on the babysitter. The summer babysitter will be paid and will be expected to stay the entire time.

Susi feels that the church should have a defibrillator due to age of population. Due to the cost involved Susi is looking for a program to fund one. She will work on this.

MINISTRY REPORTS

Christian Education: Maureen O'Donnell reported that only two children are attending VBS this year.

She also suggested that the church opens a pre-school in the Guild House. She and Lori Haseltine will be researching this possibility.

Maureen is also looking into the blue public directional signs that should be located at Army Trail Road and Route 59 and at Army Trail and Dunham/Kirk Rd. which would direct people to the church. It was suggested that the sign would read "Little Home Church UCC." Maureen hopes to have an answer regarding the signs soon.

She is planning to have routine meetings with the Pastor.

Congregational Life: Susannah reported that the Garden Party on June 14th was a success. Next year's plans would be to open the event to more of the community.

It was noted that Jane also did a great job with coordinating Ron's retirement celebration.

An all-church gathering at the Lesswing home is being planned. Possible date is August 23rd.

Evangelism: Carol Burger reported that there was a dinner party for prospective members that was held at her house in April. She urged David to call on these new members. Pastor David mentioned that the couples that are getting married August 2nd and August 9th will be interested in joining.

There was a discussion regarding the fees for weddings and the need for these fees to be reviewed and updated. A proposal will be put together and presented next month.

Facilities: Our grant application to replace the Parish hall doors with a power assist ones has been submitted to the Retirement Research Foundation by Anne Bouchard and we are waiting for a response. Rick Alex is preparing a list of specs for the facilities painting projects in order to get bids. An electrician is coming to look at sanctuary fans and church phones. The bids for the sound system in the sanctuary are being reviewed by Larry. A new electric piano is needed in the sanctuary.

Outreach: Susi reported in Valeri's absence that the upcoming year plans include reviewing our participation in the Crop Walk and the Giving Tree. Art also suggested that we review the five organizations that we currently support to determine whether we want to continue supporting these organizations or if we need to distribute our giving differently.

Stewardship: Bob reported that he plans to better utilize Church Windows and to create a visual using the cross in the parish hall to stimulate giving.

Ann McLaughlin is in the processing of sending out the statements for the first half of the year.

Worship & Spiritual Growth: The schedule has been made for pulpit associates and ushers for the next three months. Sandy will prepare information for the ushers for the website.

Susi is reviewing/revamping the usher responsibility list.

Members at Large: Kathleen reported that she had the pleasure of meeting David during his first day. She has also been spearheading the refurbishment of the offices. Kathleen and Lori Prang plan to purchase a new desk for Lori. A new computer will be purchased for the pastor.

Susannah Lesswing made a motion that Kathleen purchases a computer, to not exceed \$1000, for the pastor's use in the office. The motion was seconded by Sandy Antonelli. Motion passed. Money for the purchase will come from New Capital Assets account (501.60000.)

OLD BUSINESS: (Parking Lot List)

Parish Hall Chairs: Susannah reported on the purchase of new parish hall chairs and provided two samples to review. Discussion followed with a concern regarding storage of the chairs and overall cost, which would include a storage dolly. It was suggested that Susannah should get some samples of folding chairs as well. She will get a folding chair sample and this issue will be revisited next meeting.

New Beginnings: Was discussed during the Pastor's Report.

The following items were on the agenda but will be reviewed at a later date.

- Suggestion to create a Sexton position for sound system and onsite set up/troubleshooting during events
- After ONA
- Outreach in Living the Word

NEW BUSINESS: None

Noted observations:

- Cleaning and painting in the offices.
- The addition of the UCC link, Pilgrim Park & Tower Hill on our website.

Carol commented on how great the garden party was and thanked Kathleen Kaska for her coordination.

Move to adjourn by Jane and seconded by Anne.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, August 12, 2014, 7:00 p.m.

Pastor David gave the closing prayer at 9:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristen Thornton
Church Clerk