

Minutes
Little Home Church Closed Council Meeting
February 23, 2014

In Attendance: Carol Berger, Anne Bouchard, Kathy Haben, Lori Haseltine, Kathleen Sullivan Kaska, Susannah Lesswing, Jan Marchese, Ann McLaughlin, Jane Shelton, Susi Winquist

Absent: Sandy Antonelli, Louise Aughnay, Valeri Baldwin, Ron Purser, Art Zwemke

Moderator Kathy Haben began the meeting at 11:02 with a prayer. She requested the meeting due to the many emails on various topics that had been recently sent. Kathy asked that people keep the emails to one topic only so they will be easier to follow as we have so many different issues being discussed right now. She also explained that Ministries are submitting reports (via email) in advance of the Council meetings so the discussions take place at the ministry meetings. Council will then only discuss issues that are brought from the ministries as needed.

Property Updates:

Kathy explained that the Peterson property is selling; however, due to septic problems, the Dixon property is on hold. She was in the Dixon house on February 9 and it was clean to sell, but now there are problems with the water pipes and the septic field. Susannah asked that we get another opinion on the state of the septic field before we spend any money on repairs. She also asked about the person in the community that was interested in purchasing the house. When asked if we should we move forward with that person, Kathy said if the Dixon property committee wanted to proceed, that is ok. Anne said the Dixon septic is a problem that cannot be solved until spring with a soil test. Art is handling the listing and working with the realtor, Gail is our attorney, and facilities is handling the ability to sell the properties.

UCC Search and Call Process:

Kathy had asked everyone to read the UCC information for guidance and counsel. The Search and Call Process usually takes 18 to 36 months. It took 2 years to find Pastor Ron. Kathy asked for comments. Susannah said the information seemed very logical although she had questions regarding the pastor remaining in the community with the new pastor. Kathy explained that they have to be invited to return by the newly called pastor as an official step. Our situation is somewhat different as Pastor Ron is retiring and not leaving at the request of the congregation. The UCC suggests two search committees, an Interim Search Committee and a Pastoral Call Search Committee and that the second committee does not even begin until the first committee is in place. Options are a transitional person as a contract hire or a transition pastor. Kathy asked UCC if we need New Beginnings if we are also getting a new pastor and UCC advised both. She hopes to have an Interim Search Committee established in March and a pulpit supply pastor from UCC in mid-July. We need to determine the traits of the people on the Pastoral Call Search Committee: their demographics and their gifts. We need people who are attending church on a regular basis. There has to be an odd number of members for the vote. Once the Pastoral Call Search Committee is in place, hopefully by the fall, we can start reviewing resumes this winter and visit the candidates' churches. We also need to have funding to enable us to make these visits. The UCC process does not recommend hiring the interim, so the UCC will not send someone as interim who is interested in the position. Kathy and Susi met with UCC Conference

Minister Jonathan Knight and discussed our church's present situation and what we might be looking for in a pastor. He recommended taking our time and not to rush the process. They discussed the five transition challenges and five temptation short-cuts. We need the right candidates on the search committees and strong leadership. Our membership is a little over 200 and our normal service attendance is 50. A discussion occurred whether our deficit is perceived as a challenge by UCC and what we are looking for in a pastor. Jonathan is located at the Illinois Conference in Westchester and Ann suggested we ask him to come one Sunday. Kathy said that in March we could have an Interim Search Committee and it could be 3 people who select from profiles that the UCC provides. The goal would be to have an interim identified by April, but will they wait 3 months? Last time we had 3 interim pastors because the Pastoral Call Search Committee had not found a pastor. Carol said that in the past the committee met every Monday night and it was a big job, taken seriously. Anne said that the committee has to have members that are committed to work. We need to use the interim pastor as much as possible to find our pastor. We also need to keep communicating so we can have the process happen as quickly as possible. All agree we are grateful to have had Ron for 13 years and we feel blessed.

Budget Deficit:

It was suggested that Art and Ann be on a separate committee working on the budget deficit which is a concern that needs to be addressed. The purpose of the committee would be to address the (\$52,000) deficit in the 2014 budget. Susannah suggested that we possibly include Congregational Life Ministry on the committee for fund raising ideas and events. Anne suggested that we keep the congregation informed through the BTW. Kathy will contact Art to make sure he is available to be on this committee.

Pastor Ron's Retirement Celebration:

Another concern is Ron's retirement and celebration at the end of June. It was suggested that on June 29, which is a fifth Sunday, we have a service in the afternoon with a reception. We would need a committee to handle the event, (including a gift). Anne, Carol, Jane and Susannah volunteered to be on the committee. They need to include Larry and the children of the congregation. Pastor Ron would probably like to have someone invited from UCC, Jonathan Knight is not available that Sunday. Anne said that the UCC recommends a pastor exit conference with HR people (Personnel Committee/Pastoral Relations) to get Pastor Ron's thoughts regarding recommendations for our future.

UCC New Beginnings:

There is a New Beginnings webinar on Tuesday that is going to be recorded. We can have a group meeting to discuss it at a later date. It is free and everyone can view it when they want as long as they register. The New Beginnings program is very busy and we may not be able to get them booked this year.

By-the-Way Newsletter:

The By the Way information needs to be submitted by the 17th. Kathy will include something regarding the meeting with the UCC.

Congregation Information:

Kathleen asked as a member at large how she should respond to questions from the congregation. She summarized that in March we plan to have an Interim Search Committee with an interim

pastor in mid-July. By the Fall of 2014, a Pastoral Call Search Committee would be in place with possibly a minister selected by August of 2015, if not sooner.

Kathy reminded everyone that the Spring UCC Meeting is the Saturday after Easter, April 26th in Glen Ellyn. It would be a great way to network with others from our Association and Conference.

Kathy gave the closing prayer at 12:21 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jan Marchese
Church Clerk