

Minutes
Little Home Church Council Meeting
March 12, 2013

In Attendance: Carol Berger, Anne Bouchard, Kathy Haben, Karen Hansen, Lori Haseltine, Bob Kaska, Ann McLaughlin, Ron Purser, Dan Roach, Nancy Schatzeder, Wally Setlock, Jane Shelton.

Absent: Gianna Marchese, Jan Marchese, Marilyn Poole, Art Zwemke

Wally opened the meeting at 7:10 p.m. Pastor Ron then offered a prayer and mentioned several people needing special prayer consideration.

Approval of Minutes: Wally asked if there were any changes or corrections to the February minutes. Wally and Anne both offered minor changes. Lori moved to approve the minutes, as amended, seconded by Nancy. The motion was approved with all ayes. The minutes were approved.

Pastor's Report: Ron reported that he is spending a lot of time with some counseling issues. These issues seem to be cyclical. Larry and Ron are working on the Lenten and Easter services and music. Ron encouraged all to attend the Good Friday service at 1 pm at the Immanuel UCC in Bartlett, which also includes Immanuel UCC of Streamwood. Ron reminded us about last month's discussion about the Danish group coming over the summer. Dianna Griffin will coordinate the effort, but help is needed. The weekend of July 6-7 is the tentative time of need, but we have an evening wedding at the church on the 6th. The concert could be held on Sunday afternoon, the 7th, if we can work out the details. Nancy asked about beneficial results for LHC. Ron said it would be nice for the young people of the Danish group and our young people to get together. Larry has not expressed an opinion on this yet. Ron said that typically a group like this holds a concert and needs housing for the participants. Carol wondered if we could offer the space for the concert if Dianna can arrange the housing needs. Jane said it is her understanding that things are moving along with the group's plans. Ron said they would need housing for the 6th and 7th of July. Anne suggested we could share the responsibilities with another church. Ann noted that it is just after the 4th and potentially part of a long holiday weekend. Ron will speak to Dianna for details and also see if there is another local church that can work with us. Kathy offered to follow up with Dianna, and will let Ron know what she learns.

Ron said we have an ad through Suburban Life Media, which runs in The Republican, and costs \$42.50 per month, which seems high. Karen added that there are a lot of free online listings. Ron said we do some of that. Nancy suggested we leave the ad in the paper through Easter. Lori asked if it is with a group of churches? It is in a short list of churches. Anne suggested we drop the ad, and asked about Bob's opinion. Bob said it is only included with a short list of churches. Ann and others agreed that the paper is not widely read. Bob moved to stop running the ad. Ann seconded. All ayes, the motion passed. We will discontinue the ad in April. Karen added that she will put church info in the free listings that she uses for her garden club.

The alarm system was checked out today and passed.

Treasurer's Report: Art was absent and Ann presented the report. She said that we are in solid shape and we are ahead of our three year average for receipts, and ahead of where we expected to be for the budget. We have a \$21,000 surplus versus an \$11,000 surplus of a year ago. The facilities ministry is a little over budget. Ron added that we had a large bill for snow removal recently. Nancy moved to accept the Treasurer's report as reported by Ann. Wally second. Motion carried with all ayes.

Moderator's Report:

Peterson House Update: Wally stated that Karen Ashe had a showing on Thursday evening and the people want to see the house again during the daytime. Karen mentioned again the water in the basement and Wally explained that it is seepage that makes it seem that there is always water in the basement. Wally and Dan have discussed a gravity-based system to deal with this, which Wally has used before. It would cost approximately \$300-400 to purchase and DIY labor. Ann moved to go forward with these repairs. Bob seconded. Motion carried with all ayes. Bob asked about Karen's listing agreement. No information was readily available.

Dixon House Update: Wally asked Karen Ashe for a market assessment and also suggested we talk to another realtor for comparison. Karen H. said she could contact a realtor she knows in Geneva. Ann asked what is our timeline for Dixon? Wally would like to give the tenants as much time as possible. Ann recalled that we hope to show the house without tenants living in it, which would be after June.

Moderator Elect's Report: Kathy thanked us for including the Comments to Council section in the By the Way. Kathy said that she remembered going to Pilgrim Park, near Princeton, IL, when her kids were younger. They offer weekend stays in exchange for work, which might be an opportunity for our church to do together. Alternatively, we could go just for a retreat opportunity. Timing would probably be late spring before the camping season starts. Jane said that while it is a good idea, we only have one family attending with camp-age kids. Jane feels there is too much upheaval right now for a congregational retreat, and also has limitations with her own schedule. Ann also said it is too late for her to plan for this spring. Nancy said if we are thinking about a retreat weekend, it needs a certain amount of planning and would like to spend a bit more time looking at this. Anne suggested maybe there is a fifth Sunday in the fall that could work. Nancy said September 29 is a fifth Sunday. Kathy will look into available dates. Nancy and Anne will discuss the idea further. Bob suggested that maybe we want to build on the idea but keep the event here at the church. Jane agreed that keeping it at the church might make more sense for where we are at this time, and she worries that we don't have the momentum for a trip to Pilgrim Park, but perhaps we can start with a weekend here. Nancy added that we can add team building into it and Jane suggested also adding a spiritual element. Cong Life, Education and WSG will get together and discuss. Bob added that the key is to get people to sign up and commit.

Kathy said last month we discussed daily checking on the Peterson House. Ron said he or someone is over there almost every day. Kathy also noted that we discussed getting a back-up sump pump in the Peterson House. Dan will check into that.

Ministry Reports:

Christian Education: Lori reported that Gianna and Leigh both want to work on VBS but we don't have a date yet. Jane added that we don't want to conflict with the Pony Club camp week (possibly June 19 -22). Lori also said she only had one child in church on Sunday, a visiting grandchild, but she did receive positive feedback from the grandmother! Jane added that Larry has a plan for incorporating children into the summer music program. Jane said that we also want to honor graduating high school seniors and June 2 might work.

Congregational Life: Ann and Anne have discussed the suggestion to have a third party contact people who haven't been attending church recently. Ann said that a good first step might be to mail a letter and return postcard to people asking their preferences and inquiring about their wishes, with options for future action and contact by someone from the church. Ann and Anne also discussed possibly offering an online survey for members to take. Kathy asked if we can describe our actions in the BTW. Ann and Anne will firm up their plans and report it in the BTW. Jane noted that we should be targeting the people who are not coming. Ann added that we might also reach out to people who have left the church in the past few years. Bob added that we might want to consider a way to offer the chance to provide anonymous information. Anne and Nancy said to be cautious about anonymous information.

Evangelism: Bob provided a summary of recent activity by Evangelism (attached). Kathleen K and Lori P have been working on the website, specifically to update the calendar. Nancy suggested that we include copies of the BTW in the narthex. Karen added that our mission statement and info about us is buried in a tab on the website. She has noticed that other churches have their mission statement on the home page. Others agreed that this would be a good enhancement. Anne mentioned adding the UCC logo to the homepage, and Kathy mentioned that the banners inside do not have the UCC logo. Wally noted that the email that came today had the logo on it. Carol wondered about the 449 people who have viewed the picture of the church posted on Facebook. Bob added that it is important for all of us to mention "Like" the church on our Facebook pages. Bob added that we received an award from Constant Contact, the firm we use for our email blasts. Great! Kathleen is working on a poster and notecards to invite potential new members to the Easter service. Carol wondered if we need to add an IT ministry or committee?

Facilities: Wally introduced Dan as the acting Facilities Chair, with the possibility of Dan continuing on after June. Dan fiddled with the pilot light to get the hot water heater working for the kitchen. Dan hopes to remove the two old water heaters out of the basement and he will look at the hot water heater at Peterson House on Sunday. The Guild House needs a new light bulb for the emergency sign. Wally said that the sump pump under the sanctuary was making some noise on Sunday and Dan will look into it. Ron is also looking at some options for grant money to make our Parish Hall doors more accessible. Anne will talk to Dan and Ron about the grant available as mentioned last month.

Outreach: Wally reported that we still need about several people to supply Easter Dinners for the food pantry. Forms are in the Parish Hall and the delivery date is Saturday, March 23. People are willing to shop if someone would like to contribute cash.

Stewardship: Ann reported that we have 64-67 pledges this year, with last year being around 71. Wally asked if we should contact the ones who did not pledge. Ann said a few people elected not to pledge this year and it seems that it is late in the year to pursue a pledge.

Worship & Spiritual Growth: Nancy and Lori mentioned that there is a conflict on March 21 with a concert here at LHC and evening bible study. Nancy reminded everyone to mindfully greet new people when we see them in worship or fellowship.

Members-at-Large: No report.

Open and Affirming: Anne reported that the exploratory committee met on Sunday and decided that the next congregational meeting will be after Easter, on April 7. Bob asked if there has been a decision to actually take the ONA question to a vote and Wally said that we have not yet decided to call a vote on this. Anne mentioned that at the conference she attended they suggested taking a straw poll to find out where people are on the issue. If a person is thinking they would vote “No” to being ONA, it was suggested to ask if they had additional questions, needed more time to decide or needed additional information. Bob also said that there was an assumption that a vote was planned for June, and he wondered about the voting process. Anne said that it was announced in the fall that the earliest we would consider voting was in June, but that at this time there is not set time to vote. Anne also said that the voting process has not been determined but that all members would have a chance to vote.

Wally mentioned that the committee discussed how do we reach people who aren't coming to the congregational meetings, adding that about 25-30 people have been attending the meetings and with a membership around 100 or 110 or so we are only reaching only 20-25% of the congregation. Anne said that we have had information on the bulletin board in the Parish Hall and in the By the Way. Carol said that as a member at large she has tried to reach out to people in the past few weeks and some have expressed the wish to drop the process. Ann added that she has also heard people saying, “let's get on with it.” Nancy added that you want to have enough time for people to understand why you are going through the process in the first place. Bob said that there is an assumption that if we have enough meetings and enough education that we are going to get somewhere other than where we are right now. Bob added that he thinks this is a political issue, not appropriate for us to consider as a church. Nancy said that we are hoping to take it from a political issue to a spiritual issue, asking what does it mean as a church to study this. Ann added that she considers this a social justice issue and if this were only a political issue the UCC and we would lose our 501(c)(3) status for working on it. Bob said that it is raging in the political arena and people might not be able to separate the political world's activities. Ann said that there are people on both sides of the aisle for and against gay marriage, but what we are aiming for is that -- via a small sign on the church -- we say to the outside world and people who are LGBT that they are welcome and accepted at this church. Ann said that we are trying to take the heightened language out of this discussion, and that we need to take the politics out of this conversation as much as possible. Lori added that we are talking about toning down the nastiness. Karen added that the pastor from Barrington said that the rainbow is not copyrighted.

Bob asked why we as a church are being asked to consider this issue? Anne said that the issue is raised because historically, churches have discriminated against and ostracized people because they are gay and the UCC has taken a stand to say that as a denomination, we don't discriminate. Bob said that there are people who don't want to be asked to stand up on one side or the other of this issue. Karen said that as Member –at-large she has talked to people who haven't come to any of the meetings but made up their mind [to be against ONA] before the meetings even

started. Lori remarked on the link provided to the committee regarding ONA FAQs from other churches and said it might be helpful for the committee to create one for our congregation.

Ron said he was in conversation with the St. Charles UCC church and they said they took 5 years to study and vote on ONA, with a very contentious start. Carol said that the committee is working on these points: setting a schedule for the next meetings, looking at if ONA passes, how would this church change, and, what must we do if we become ONA. Carol added if we decide to vote, what kind of preparation should the congregation have? Bob said it is not a timing issue, rather it is important that everyone be able to vote. Bob added that there is an assumption that a no vote carries _____????

Nancy distributed an article discussing culture streams, and reminded everyone that the UCC website is very helpful. She also suggested that it is wise to remember the role of UCC in other civil rights movements over time.

New Business: Wally mentioned that occasionally we have a member or regular attendee who is in dire need of support. Wally said it might be nice to have a packet available that would include references for services or ways to seek assistance. Things needed might include child care, transportation, even paying utility bills, or location of the food pantries in the area. Perhaps all ministries can work together to compile information. Nancy cautioned that we need to be aware of the potential for people who might take advantage of us as a result of offering services. Kathy said Wayne Township has a link on their website that provides information like this. Wally asked the ministries to think about this and to begin to compile information. Bob asked how often we are approached for help? Ron said it seems to come in cycles, adding that such a pamphlet it would be helpful especially if he is not in the office. Wally said it would be specifically meant to provide first to the congregation, and perhaps to the wider community.

Next meeting: April 9, 2013, 7:00 p.m.

Ann moved to adjourn and Nancy seconded the motion. The motion was approved with all ayes. Ron led the closing Mizpah Benediction at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Bouchard for Jan Marchese
Church Clerk