

Minutes
Little Home Church Council Meeting
November 13, 2012

In Attendance: Carol Berger, Anne Bouchard, Peter Gatsch, Kathy Haben, Karen Hansen, Kathleen Kaska (for Bob Kaska), Ann McLaughlin, Ron Purser, Nancy Schatzeder, Wally Setlock, Art Zwemke, Lori Haseltine

Absent: Gianna Marchese, Jan Marchese, Jane Shelton

Wally began the meeting at 7:10 p.m. and asked for prayer requests. Pastor Ron then opened the meeting with a prayer.

Approval of Minutes: Wally asked if there were any changes or corrections to the October minutes. Kathy asked about the difference between our budget and what was requested by the UCC for Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM). Wally explained that we budget what we think we can do and the wider church asks for an amount they hope to receive. Marilyn said that a couple years ago we had to reduce our outreach budget related to OCWM, while attempting to keep up with our local outreach. Nancy moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Ann. The motion was approved with all ayes.

Pastor's report: Not much to say except Ron is working on the upcoming Christmas season.

Treasurer's Report: Art reported that both pledges and total receipts are ahead of the trend line, which hasn't happened in recent memory. 82.9% of total receipts goal has been collected and 85.76% of pledges are in. We are in the red up to \$23,058, compared to last year's deficit of \$4206, due to last year's request to members and friends to quash the deficit. We will most likely have a deficit this year. Art referenced the Illinois Conference OCWM amount disparity between our budget and what they hope we will pledge. Art feels our budget amount is in the ball park for what the conference asks. Art also discussed the program that covers benefits for Ron to note that there will be a change because Ron and Maggie are both now eligible for Medicare. As we go forward we need to be thoughtful about how the expected deficit will impact our budget decisions, specifically concerning staff salaries. Art reminded all that ministry budgets are due in December, to be refined at the January Council meeting. The January meeting is tentatively scheduled for January 27. Art also added that we have not moved too much on our endowment fund process and updated us on the Brent Alex fund, which is now over \$40,000. Art has asked the Alexes about whether we want to consider using the fund for scholarships. They have indicated that the general purpose of the fund is to benefit youth, but Art is suggesting that perhaps it would be a good idea to start giving away some of the money. Marilyn added that she has worked with a community foundation to give scholarships. Ann moved that we accept the Treasurer's report, Lori seconded. All in favor and the report is accepted.

Moderator's Report: The next Council meeting is at the Setlock's house at 6pm, on December 7. There will be a brief meeting mostly budget related and then dinner will be served! Significant others are welcome.

Moderator Elect's Report: Kathy reported that she really enjoyed attending the recent Association meeting. She felt that it was well worth attending and recommends ministry leaders and moderators attend next fall. Kathy wondered about the Action Items list. Wally said that he will check on the status of the list for the next meeting.

Church Action/Focus Items:

Open and Affirming: Anne reported that we have had three meetings so far and wondered if we should postpone the December meeting due to the Cantata.

Wally felt the meeting on Sunday was good and interesting to hear about the ONA experiences of other churches. There was additional discussion about the recent meeting which featured representatives from the UCC churches in Glen Ellyn and Arlington Heights. Carol noted that the point of inviting speakers in is to gather information. Peter said that a lot of people are wondering where does the church stand and added that he does not want to talk about ONA for two years. Nancy said that we have dedicated ourselves to the process and if we vote too early we truncate the process. She said that we will each come to this from different places. Kathleen said that she is fine with the process but doesn't want it to overshadow other events within the church, since there are a significant amount of resources being devoted to the issue. Wally agreed that a lot of time is being spent on the issue and opined about what would have been the result of a similar amount of time and effort devoted to membership? Peter added that we need to hear from alternative sources. Kathy said that she asked the two speakers if they thought we should bring in alternative viewpoints and they agreed that we should. Kathy also talked to Gary Estes about his recent By the Way article.

Carol said that perhaps calling the committee an Exploratory Committee was not the best name for the committee since perhaps the committee is perceived as looking at how do we accomplish this rather than how do we explore it...this might be the source of some confusion. Nancy wondered if we should reform the committee? Discussion ensued about how the committee considered the issue. Carol said that there may be a perception that we have not considered all angles of the issue. Karen asked if minutes had been taken at the committee meetings; the committee did not take minutes. Wally and Nancy suggested that maybe we should open up the Exploratory Committee meetings.

Nancy felt that we have to be careful about how we speak about sides of the issue, since it is a multifaceted issue. Lori added that it is an emotional issue, which complicates it. Carol added that we need to try to meet the needs of the congregation. Lori said that both speakers added that they tried to meet individually to address the concerns of individuals. Anne said that she has had trouble discerning what the alternative point of view would be, since we are not ONA now and we are looking at becoming ONA. Peter asked who would decide. The congregation will decide, but the time for the vote is not a hard fixed date. Lori added that it sounds like some people are staying away from the meeting because they have concerns, and it would be helpful to encourage people to voice their concerns. Nancy wondered if maybe people don't feel comfortable speaking out. Kathleen said perhaps there could be small group sessions, adding

that she does not have a clear idea of the process. The process was explained. Carol added that this is a new for all of us and we are finding our way and we need to be mindful and respectful of our efforts. Nancy added that members-at-large can be helpful to hear concerns from the congregation. Kathleen suggested that maybe we put a status report in the December issue. Kathy said perhaps everyone on the committee could call people in the congregation who have not attended any of the discussion meetings to start a dialogue. Peter said that half of his problem with ONA is that we have financial issues which he feels are more important. Nancy said that we are trying to be people of Christ and how we “are” matters. Peter said that church is a choice and if they don’t like the message they will move on. Marilyn added that church is more than a community center. All agreed that we have taken up quite a bit of time with this discussion!

Peterson House Update: Wally spoke to Karen who said she still has an interested party who has a house to sell. The buyer wondered if we would consider a contingency...we are not sure we would do that. There was another showing this week, with no feedback. No offers yet. Ann said that her understanding of a contingency is that you can continue showing even if you have a contingency. Wally suggested that this would be a good question for Karen, as to what we would be allowed to do or limited from doing. Ron said he would talk with Karen to find out what it would entail and mean. Wally added that Karen is still working on keeping the toilets rust free. Kathleen added that we could try Whink tablets, which last for a month. Carol asked when would Karen report again. Wally said she will come anytime we ask. Ann suggested it would be good to ask her to come in January, before the Janual meeting.

Ministry Reports:

Christian Education: Lori said they are getting ready to make Christmas decorations. There were not a lot of kids last week. Ron said that we will have a presentation on Sunday by the Indonesian foreign exchange student who is living with the Surtas.

Nancy wondered if maybe Thursday night bible study might not work in December due to the busy season. She will think about that. Karen said that she and Jane Shelton are working on a flier to invite kids to participate in the Pageant. Art suggested an email blast and Karen said she will also put one up in the post office. Carol said there is a concern over the lack of young people in the church. Nancy said that we could consider being a place where kids in the community could make gifts for their families. Art suggested possibly a Christmas time bible school (next year?). Ron added that the numbers of enrollments are also down at Wayne School.

Congregational Life: Anne B. said that she has looked into a variety of websites that we could use if a family needs help with meals, rides or other special help.

Evangelism: Kathleen provided a written report (attached), which covered a Wayne Days handout, postcard mailings, church windows management, website info, and the Advent Tea. Art would like to see if we can get a look at the demographics of the congregation by using Church Windows to break that out. Kathleen would like everyone to take a look at the church Facebook page which seems to be an effective way of reaching people beyond our congregation. The reminder has gone out for the December By the Way.

Facilities: Wally said there are two proposals for repair of the chimney, and both bids seemed high to Wally. Ron agreed, adding that one of the bids was from a company who has done furnace work for us and given us good pricing in the past. Art wondered if we could sell the old bricks that will come off when we shorten the height of the chimney. It was recommended that the bricks be retained and not hauled away in case they might be sold. Peter moved to accept the bid from the known contractor, and Ann seconded. The motion passed. Ron added that the improvements may also help with our insurance costs.

Ron added that we also have a bid from a contractor we have worked with previously to replace the furnace/air conditioner in the office. This is something to consider and there are a number of factors related to cost, need and timing. Anne suggested we get a couple additional bids before going forward. Wally has someone to recommend for another bid.

A few light bulbs need to be replaced in the Parish Hall and in Lori's office.

Ron said that currently the sound in the sanctuary seems to be acceptable to the congregation. He is still talking to a benefactor about the sound system in the Parish Hall.

Outreach: Marilyn said that we are doing very well with our Thanksgiving dinners. We have also had some cash donations which can be used going forward for the Christmas dinners if needed. Kathy Thorne and Maggie Purser are going to work with Wayne School to create the Giving Tree. Lori said that Rich Doerr has all of the Crop Walk paper work but we don't have a final amount yet.

Stewardship: Ann said that we have about 30 pledges which is normal for the first week of the Stewardship campaign. Ann is changing her email so please update your contact list.

Worship & Spiritual Growth: Nancy S. reported she is working hard to be available for the Hanging of the Greens. Nancy said that in the By the Way article she suggested that donations come in to cover the greens. Mention was made of Platt Hill supplying the large wreath for the sanctuary. Anne and Nancy will work on the quantities needed for roping and swags or wreaths. Kathleen said that she would get the wreath for the exterior of the sanctuary. There will be a potluck following Hanging of the Greens. Karen said that Congregational Life can help with set up.

Members-at-Large: No report.

Next meeting: December 7, 2012, 6:00 p.m. at the Setlock's home.

Nancy moved to adjourn and Lori seconded the motion. The motion was approved with all ayes. Ron led the Mizpah benediction to close at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Bouchard for Jan Marchese
Church Clerk