

Minutes
Little Home Church Council Meeting
October 13, 2015

In Attendance: Anne Bouchard, Barb Braulick, Kathleen Sullivan Kaska, Bob Kaska, Alex Kentfield, Ann McLaughlin, David Russell, Kristen Thornton, Susi Winquist, Carol Berger

Absent: Frank Muno, Art Zwemke, Jane Shelton, Chip Braulick, Valeri Baldwin,

Moderator Alex Kentfield began the meeting at 7:18 pm. Joys and concerns were shared. Pastor David Russell shared a parable and brief lesson followed by an opening prayer.

Approval of Minutes: No corrections were made to the September minutes. Ann M. moved to approve the revised minutes, seconded by Kathleen. Minutes approved.

Pastor's Report: Pastor David reported

October 2015

- I thought our Outdoor Service went very well with Bryan Sirchio leading us in song and thought provoking lyrics. Thanks to The Men's Group and all others who helped us with a fun picnic! The Men and I have learned that if we want to do a Blessing of the Bikes we need to partner with a bike club or dealership.
- The *Connections Small Group Ministry* has involved the facilitators and me in an effort to get some new small groups started. We have several interested folks and plan on getting groups started very soon.
- I reached out to Wayne Village Trustee Ann Tigge whom I met at Flag Days. She lives on Glos Street close to the church and knows the Junkermans who live two homes north of the church. I have subsequently visited Gene and Sue Junkerman to offer prayer and bring Sunday flowers to Sue who has Alzheimers disease and is on hospice care.
- Ten of us visited the Ahmadiyya mosque Saturday night 9/26 for sharing food, discussion and observation of worship. The hospitality was very welcoming! On Sunday 10/25 members of their community will be visiting us for observing worship (the Imam and I will deliver a dialogue message), followed by discussion and a potluck. I really hope many of you will come 10/25 to learn more about how we can build bridges instead of walls in our world.
- Our Men's Retreat at Tower Hill Camp UCC Sawyer, Michigan was great! We began with a fun dinner at a local brewery restaurant followed by a campfire with somemores and introductions. Saturday we spent time sharing stories and experiencing the powerful fellowship of men's spirits growing.

- With the help of Nancy Schatzeder we have completed 3 of the 4 weddings here at LHC in October. Last weekend was a bit crowded with a wedding Saturday and another Sunday. One of the couples, Jamie and Vanessa Kokoszka are joining the church ☺
- I attended the annual conference of interim ministers in Starved Rock where I received some good ideas and felt the LHC is doing a lot of the right things particularly in marketing/evangelism.

At Council, Pastor David spoke about the interfaith exchange and potluck and reviewed the planned schedule for the day. During the 9:30 service, David and the Imam Nasir will have a dialogue. Afterwards, the Ahmadiyya will give a summary of Islam which will be followed by the congregation breaking into three small groups in which we need three facilitators. The three group topics would be first, the roles of women, secondly, the holy days and holidays and lastly, worship and prayer. The discussions will conclude with a Potluck. David has asked the Mosque to please have their women attend the service. David will ask Lori to do an email blast and have a “sign up” for the events.

David asked council if paper copies of the reports need to be provided at council meetings. Council felt that only the minutes, agenda, and the treasurer’s report need to be copied for the council meeting. This will save on copy expenses.

Treasurer’s Report: Art Zwemke submitted a complete financial report for September. The following is the cover sheet with his comments. Art was absent. Questions about the report should be followed up with him.

Treasurer’s Report
September 30, 2015

A – 1 Total Operating Receipts YTD of \$145,556 is 59.41% of Total Receipts Budget for 2015 of \$245,000 versus 68.06% three (3) year average. Total pledges received of \$120,715 are 71.01% of Total Pledges Budget of \$170,000 versus 75.64 of three (3) year average. Overall Receipts are well behind historical trend. Received \$3,000 toward Budget Deficit.

B – 1 - B - 6 YTD Net Income (Loss) of (\$37,478) in 2015 compared to prior year Net Income (Loss) of (\$43,117) in 2014 and Net Income (Loss) Budget of (\$16,305).

C – 1 – C - 2 Comparative Balance Sheets. Overall financial position of \$224,857 at 09/30/2015 compared to \$265,976 at 09/30/2014 and \$232,339 at 08/31/2015.

D- 1 Consolidated Fund Activity

E – 1 - E – 3 Budget Worksheet for 2016

F – 1 Outreach Tracking

Bob moved to approve the treasurer's report which was seconded by Susi. All were in favor.
Report approved.

Bob Kaska introduced the concept of the "Balanced Budget Proposal." This proposal will hopefully help the church avoid the deficit that it has had to deal with this year because of a lack of funds from contributions not pledges. Bob is suggesting that council prepares and approves a budget that is based only on committed pledges instead of a combination of pledges and anticipated monetary donations. As a result, there will be less money to prepare the budget next year. Therefore, some areas of funding may need to be reduced in order to keep within the committed pledged amount. One area of reduced budget that was mentioned was Outreach ministry. As much as we want to provide to other organizations, we may need to pay our own fixed expenses first and find other ways in which we can help and raise money for a mission, such as organize a community fundraiser for the cause. However, to reduce the amount of money that would need to be cut from the budget, the stewardship committee will be pushing and promoting increased pledging. After much discussion, it was decided to develop a forum to pull agreement. Alex asked that by next month's meeting, that a steering committee be formed which would include our treasurer, Art to further develop this Balanced Budget proposal. Alex would like the council to make a decision at the November council meeting.

The Illinois Conference of the United Church of Christ sent the council a letter requesting more money than what we have budgeted. Alex will respond back to the conference.

Moderator's Report:

Alex submitted the following report

Moderator's Report and Comments, September activity

In late September, I had my third monthly meeting with Pastor David. We again discussed the ongoing general and specific feedback received from the congregation concerning our interfaith dialogue efforts, particularly as it related to our current "exchange" with a local mosque. I have been to several other UCC churches and to several mosques and temples in the Chicago area over the last month or so, and find that *all* of them are attempting to reach out and build bridges of tolerance amongst each other. We all recognize that in each of the religious groups there are conservatives, and that many of these folks wish no dialogue at all (this was actually an agenda topic at an interfaith conference that I attended last week – details in next month's Moderator's report).

We have noted that our attendance is trending upward – GREAT! - however as we have only two new members "in the pipeline" we may have to cancel the new membership classes for this "cycle" and roll these new members into a later class. Just the same, October seems to be a busy month with three or four weddings (and hopefully new members from that cadre), and many activities.

The various ministries are all doing a fantastic job of carrying out their responsibilities, and doing so in a fiscally prudent fashion. That said, we received a letter from UCC Illinois Conference concerning "Our Church's Wider Mission" account (i.e. our contribution to UCC's wider efforts). We have given \$3,500 to date, and our "Recommended Fair Share Goal" is \$17,390. As we wish to become closer to the UCC, and as they provide us with assistance in

many areas, we need to discuss our intent and capabilities concerning our “in arrears account” and advise the UCC accordingly.

Pastor David and I also further discussed the ramping up of “New Beginnings” program and our small group program and what this may mean in the long range plans of our church.

Moderator Elect: No report for this month. Kathleen Kaska submitted a communications report.

MINISTRY REPORTS

Christian Education: No report. Frank was unable to attend this meeting due to work commitments.

Congregational Life: Barb Braulik submitted the following report.

- Blessing of the Hounds: Received wonderful feedback from parishioners as well as those from the community for the event and for the treats. Next year we may do cider instead of lemonade as a beverage in addition to coffee. We had our promotional cards passed out as well as availability on the table with desserts.
- Women's Advent Tea: Next on the committee's agenda and we have not formally started organizing it yet. Jane Shelton said she has a couple speakers she is considering for the event.
- Donation: \$200 to Men's Group to help offset cost for Blessing of the Hogs per request of Pastor David.

Evangelism:

Ann gave an update on the six people who will be joining our church. There are a couple more members that may join that group as well.

Facilities: Anne submitted a written report. Items that the facilities committee is working on are as follows.

- Working on final plans for power assist door.
- The concrete in front of the church was patched. Unfortunately, the patch didn't match even after three people looked over the books and selected what was thought to be a match. We have several repair projects involving concrete and although we were planning to do the front patio this fall, I don't think that will happen yet because we are working on the front porch stairs of the Guild house. They also require some kind of concrete footing for the posts.
- We are about to order the door for the parish hall and we have had to have numerous conversations with the door manufacturer and the power assist mechanism manufacturer to figure out exactly what kind of door will work so that we can combine the electricity and the door.
- Rick has kindly made drawings for the guild house stairs, and we need to run those by the historic commission. Also when the building inspector came out to look at the door and stair project he determined that we are required to put in some kind of railing across from the parish hall door so that someone in a wheelchair doesn't roll right off the edge onto the cobblestone patio.

- Also we got an OK from the building and zoning chairman to have an open ended building permit.

Pastor David reported that a tree from our property is leaning towards the neighbor's house. It was recommended that Abbott Tree Service could handle the removal. After a brief discussion, Bob Kaska moved to hire Abbott Tree Service to remove the tree that is sitting on property line and is leaning towards the neighbor's house and to remove branches from a small tree that is bending over our phone line. Barb seconded. All were in favor. Motion passed.

Outreach: No update.

Stewardship: Bob provided the following report. He spoke about the Balanced Budget Resolution during the review of the treasurer's report.

Good news from Stewardship...our Challenge Match initiative has been a success; incremental pledges of \$19,300.00 have been received from our leadership group of (11) Members...now the fun begins.

We must match this challenge and raise an additional \$19K from the remaining congregation...to do this we need full participation, I ask that every Council Member make an incremental pledge for this year as part of the leadership of LHC.

Stewardship Sunday is November 15th; our theme this year will build on our New Beginnings efforts; a letter will go out in early November with pledge cards for presentation at the alter on November 15th; followed by a Stewardship Brunch.

We need to discuss two important items at our meeting.

1. Ministry Pledge for 2016
2. Balanced Budget Resolution

At Council, Bob discussed the plan for the "**Wayne Walk**" which we would be held in early October 2016. The plans give details and a way in which \$40,000 could be raised. The overall plans includes attractions of the area and three interesting home s (to be determined) to be offered to view. Tourists would pay to see these places.

Kathleen spoke about the "**Appeal letter**" for this December. Discussion followed whether we should do the letter again this year or not. Overall, the council decided that the church should proceed with another appeal letter with funding to be determined

Worship and Spiritual Growth: Update submitted by Jane Shelton

Some greens have been ordered for Advent/Christmas season from Karwowski boy's scout troop: outside roping, swags for doors to Guild House, Office door, Parish Hall entrance, 72" altar wreath, 36" wreath for above the sanctuary doors outside.

October 25th - reception/potluck lunch to welcome visitors from the Amahdiyya Mosque in Glen Ellyn. I will not be in town this weekend - someone needs to do a little coordinating and Parish Hall set-up.

College Care Boxes - would like to see these shipped before Halloween. Lori is helping to get the names/addresses for the 2015-16 list.

Speaker and Pianist for Women's advent tea have been contacted - but not confirmed.

Member-at-Large: Susi Winqvist submitted the following report for September

Some push back continues in relation to the Interfaith Dialogue with a Muslim congregation scheduled for later this month and next. Some other members who may have been open to this interaction now “straddle the fence” thinking we should not do anything that may “lose us” members.

We have faced similar push back on other issues and will continue to face concerns in the future. Any organization faces the risk of members “moving on” when the “fit” may longer be right for them. Folks have been noticeably absent during our interim period for various and personal reasons. Some folks may not support the mission as identified by the re-visioning process. And when a settled Pastor is called not everyone will agree with the choice whether that person is male or female, senior or young, newly ordained or experienced, or based on their sexual orientation.

As Leaders in this faith community I pray we will remain with open minds and welcome opportunities to study new things and alternate points of view. For to do so, fosters new levels of understanding and acceptance.

Susi Winqvist
Member-at-large

Communication Report: Kathleen submitted the following report.

Completed...

October BTW Newsletter

Sent October 1, 2015 — (178 sent; 99 opened; 56% open rate)

Web site—Monthly updates on homepage; Sunday schedule; Flowers & fellowship; Events; and Book Club pages

Email messaging:

October BTW News Reminder — Sent September 11(20 sent; 10 opened; 50% open rate)

Rummage Sale Time — Sent September 14(178 sent; 91 opened; 51% open rate)

Christian Muslim Dialogue — Sent September 21(178 sent; 91 opened; 51% open rate)

Blessing of the Hounds — Sent September 22(196 sent; 105 opened; 54% open rate)

Cookies Needed... — Sent September 23(178 sent; 91 opened; 51% open rate)

Church Garden Ministry #3— Sent September 23(178 sent; 97 opened; 54% open rate)

October BTW — Sent October 1(178 sent; 99 opened; 56% open rate)

Twitter — New account: @LHChurchUCC — 3 ‘Followers’, 1 ‘Following’, 3 ‘Tweets’

Facebook page — Up to 139 ‘Likes’— 12+ posts —

New Beginnings summary brochure — 8 pg. 8.5x11 piece in final edit; will be LHC published for September 20, New Beginnings Sunday

New Beginnings Re-Visioning banners — 3-banner display for Parish Hall

Wedding Programs — 4-pg wedding program produced for two LHC weddings in October

To Be Completed...

Wedding brochure/package—In writing/layout design stage

Endowment Fund brochure/presentation materials—Work w/Janet Figge to create content; layout design for review

Annual Appeal—Form committee to build on last year’s efforts and begin outlining a communication piece to send out in early November

Search and Call:

Alex report that the committee has looked at approx. 38 profiles. Some were dismissed because they didn't fit our profile. So far, there have been three in person interviews. All of the candidates are asked to present videos of their sermons. The church continues to get three or four more applicants every week.

New Beginnings:

Susi and David will be meeting soon to develop the next step of the "New Beginnings." A couple of congregation members have offered to help the long range committee. New blood will be very welcomed.

Small Groups:

There are two small groups that are forming. One group meets on Sunday night and another group on Tuesday night. Groups will be determining whether they will be meeting once a month or more frequently. Congregational Life will be reporting on activity of these groups.

OLD BUSINESS: Mentioned within the committee and ministries reports.

NEW BUSINESS:

Flowers: Alex had received an email inquiry wondering if a circle exists that coordinates and provides flowers to those who are in the hospital, sick at home, births, deaths, etc. The Pastor currently handles that duty.

Newspaper "Routes" for Flyers and Posters: It was suggested that a 'route' be established to post flyers within the community. Kathleen suggested starting a list of places where posters could be posted.

Blessing of the House, Hogs, and maybe "Critters" (2016):

Kathleen shared a plan to expand on our special event of "Blessing of the Hounds". The plan reviews ideas to have a Welcome Table; decorations around the church, refreshments, kid's activity, ceremony include "pets." Church tours and promotion.

Christmas Season Events: Kathleen reminded council to firm up the coordination of the holiday events. Not to assume that the same person will coordinate the same event every year.

Berger Donation: Carol and her family have offered to donate new permanent benches to the church courtyard in John's memory.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, November 11, 7:00 p.m.

Move to adjourn by Ann M. and seconded by Susi. All were in favor.

Pastor David gave the closing prayer at 9:26 p.m.:

Respectfully submitted,
Kristen Thornton
Church Clerk