



Church Council Minutes

Date: Tuesday, October 18, 2011

Time: 7:30 PM

Place: Chapel

Members: Jane Barker, Moderator

Sam Dammers, Vice
Moderator

Janet Guevara, Clerk

Jesse Cornman

Bob Downs

Bob Haisman

Rob Hickok

Becky Kuntz

Brian Love

Lara Miller

Amber Stitzel

Pareja

Connie Ronnow

Deb Stracco

Julie Steenhuysen

Mary Sue Voth

Church Julie Harley

Staff: Leah Fowler

Rob Leveridge

Marylen Marty-Gentile

Special Rick Steele, Seminary Intern

Guests: Laura Kliewer, President- Board
of Directors, PADS

Allen Parchem, Finance Chair

Moderator Jane Barker called the meeting to order at 7:30 and opened with a prayer.

I. Spiritual Food for Thought: Brian Thiessen Love

Brian shared his experience as the Sunday School teacher of the Kindergarten class. It has always been a joy but also an on-going challenge of telling the wonderful and exciting stories of the Old Testament, ex. The story of Moses. In preparing for the class, he often asks himself, 'how do I break this (story) down to mean something for the rest of the children's lives? What do you edit and what do you keep? What can the high schoolers assisting the class and myself take from it?' As we face changes and challenges in life, we often find ourselves complaining like the people of Israel in their journey to the promise land. Where is the burning bush? When the armies are chasing us, we wait on the Lord to part the red sea. Yet, how long do we wait?

II. Joys, Concerns and Remembrances:

Concerns: for friends and a grandniece facing cancer; a mother going through another angiogram; for a member serving jail term starting Oct 31; the Food Pantry feeling the crunch of budget cuts.

Joys: for a clear pathology report, a wedding and birthdays in the family, a grandmother visiting; a council member running for the school board of district 97; a warm welcome to Rick Steele, our seminary intern; that Leah and baby are well.

III. Omnibus Motion: Approval of Council Minutes and Confirmation

Action: The Council Minutes of September 20, 2011 was unanimously approved.

IV. Staff Reports

- **Julie** – reported that the Organist Search is on going with 4 candidates at this time. The search will be extended till Jan 2012. Our Interim Organist Michael Surratt has agreed to stay with us a little longer. The Personnel Committee has received 20 resume for the position of Office Manager. In continuing her Contemplative Leadership program, Julie is having her 2nd meeting with her Listening Group and expressed her appreciation for their support. The FIA Immigrant special event on Sunday; attendance to both UCC and Presbytery meetings about immigration issues, and we have fostered relationship with the local Berwyn Community UCC church. The Stewardship campaign result is encouraging. There is a Sweet Honey in the Rock Scholarship Concert on October 20, 2011 at the Rockefeller Church in relation to the dedication of the new Chicago Theological Seminary building the following day.
- **Rick Steele** – our seminary intern; 3rd year in McCormick Seminary. His support group in First United are Pauline Coffman, Ted Despotes, Marilyn Kauffman, Bob and Hahn and others.
- **Marylen** – is grateful to be working with dedicated Sunday School teachers, it is a gift and a blessing to work and learn from them. The Junior High spent a morning at Scoville Park and had random conversations with anybody they met in the park. They carried a sign saying “Free Prayers” and came back with pink prayer cards with prayers requests. The Confirmation class of 18 had a lively talk about the bible and truth as they go through the process of discovery to be a person of faith. Feeling cramped in the room they are occupying right now, she felt the need of a larger space.
- **Leah** – reported that last Saturday, she attended together with Lee Anderson, Marylou Anderson and Priscilla Sibley the Chicago Metropolitan Association meeting who voted unanimously Ms. Vertie Powers as the new Associate Conference Minister of the Chicago Metropolitan Association. On Oct 21 – 23, thirty members of FUSH will have their Fall Retreat at Pilgrim Park Camp and Retreat Center in Princeton, IL. On Oct 29, several FU youths and members will join Progressive Church in Chicago to work on their community garden. FUSH has also invited the youths of UCC Harvard church and Berwyn Community UCC to join for Fiesta Night on Nov 13. The Immigration Series and continuing Family Life Series: We Have a Teenager in Adult Ed will be on Nov 6, 13 and 20.

- **Rob** – The New Member Class is on going with much excitement sharing life stories and what the church means in their lives. Council is reminded to join the class on Oct 23 around 10:30 in the chapel to welcome our new members. A few men are coming together to plan for a retreat next year to have an intentional planning of issues that will be relevant and helpful to the men in our community. Oct 30, the All Saint's Day celebration will be a musically oriented worship service, this is the time we remember our lost family members and friends last the year.

V. Guest Speaker Laura Kliewer from PADS

Laura Kliewer, President of the Board of Directors announced that the West Suburban PADS is celebrating its 20th year anniversary. She came to thank First United who has supported them through the years: a shelter since 1992, has given financial help and grants as they moved to interim housing, subcommittee to provide meal for holiday parties in transitional housing and have been involved in PADS mission in so many ways.

She reported that PADS has been providing shelter to people in need 7 nights a week rotating in local congregations with thousands of volunteers to prepare the place and food. 50% of the homeless are in shelter less than week and 70% stays 30 night or less. The goal is to move them into a more stable situation and intentionally looking more into the chronically homeless. They are focusing on interim housing and job training.

Calendars commemorating the 20 year anniversary were distributed showing the of events that will take place throughout the year (Oct 2011 – Oct 2012). Local businesses will support PADS by donating a portion of its sales: Whole Foods (Nov 15, 2011 in the River Forest location), Buona Beef (Dec 2, 2011 on Roosevelt Rd and Oak Park Ave) and Sing-Along Messiah of First United Methodist Church in Oak Park (Dec 4, 2011).

VI. Budget Discussion – Council Members and Staff with Al Parchem

Stewardship results as reported by Pastor Julie: 148 pledges received as of Oct 16, 2011; 45 pledges (no change); 16 (decreased); 71 (increase) and 16 new pledges. Average amount of pledge is \$ 3,241.00 per year (with the highest at \$30,000 and lowest at \$50). Goal: \$765,000 with 300 units pledging. Stewardship calls have started and the special council budget meeting is set on Nov 5, 2011 at 9 am.

Financial Report and Budget Request binders were distributed to members of council and staff. As council approaches the budget process, we have to figure out priorities in line with our Vision 20/20 and the best return of our investment. Council will consider: the changes and transitions in our staff (Judy S Wood who is not able to come back to work, the proposed communications part time position); what are considered 'untouchables' like insurances, adding short term disability insurance; what are the new line items, what was increased from last year and what items are underfunded. With regards to the Communications Manager, some issues to consider: what problem are we solving, do we expect too much from our staff, do we need help getting things done in regards to this matter. In the line item of Salaries: increase have been temperate in the past years, is there a room for a greater increase at some point next year? \$7,000 has been appropriated to be given as bonuses recognizing the work

the staff has done (which maybe be taken from the surplus this year of approximately \$ 10,000).

The endowment fund issue will be revisited in the big picture discussion next year. First United's denominational support is calculated at \$90/member and the total amount is divided into the two denominations.

VII. Committee Reports and Motions

- **FIA –**

Action: The motion for Council to use \$3,000.00 of the CCLF fund for microloans, and \$37,000.00 for SMEF was moved, seconded and approved unanimously.

- **Personnel -**

Action: The motion for Council to authorize maternity leave for Leah Fowler of 6 weeks paid leave and 6 weeks of unpaid leave. This is consistent with the total 12 week medical leave benefit available with an additional 2 weeks of paid time (standard medical leave is 4 weeks paid). Sick, vacation and personal days will be used to pay Leah during the unpaid time and do not extend the total leave. Leah must not be out of the office for 12 consecutive leave; was moved, seconded and approved unanimously.

VIII. Moderator Report : Jane encouraged council to carefully consider amounts in the budget and come up with ideas on where we can trim or increase. Communications about the budget will be started by emailing each other. Jane also suggested to put up a wall of thanks to those who have pledged (only names but no amount). This has already been discussed by the Stewardship Committee but was not approved. Other ideas included, putting up personal testimonies that pledging matters to them and that's why they are doing it, and other ideas to continue the excitement on the pledge campaign.

IX. Vice Moderator Report: It was reported that there has been no Elder on duty on some Sundays and appreciation to those who stepped up. Elder on duty schedule were passed.

X. Where did we see/feel Council's work living the Vision?

Blessed that much hard work has been put on preparing the budget; conversation about PADS celebrating its 20 years has challenged congregations and transformed lives.; thankful for our open discussions that we had and our relationships are deepening through the year; living our new vision with the new members embodying what the church is; blessed with a large quest group, increase in number of youths and its incredible gifts; God's challenge is how we handle the challenges around this table and to let God work within; the sincerity and concern of council members with no personal agenda.

The meeting was closed in prayer by Pastor Julie.
The meeting was adjourned at 9:38 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Janet Guevara
Clerk