

Church Council Minutes

Date: Tuesday, May 18, 2010
Time: 7:30 PM
Place: Chapel
Members: Laurie Jolicoeur, Moderator Megan Lewis
Stuart Gillette, Vice Mod Brian Love
Beth Mrkvicka, Clerk Gy Menninga
Rick Ashton Lara Miller
Jane Barker Dan Pietrini
Jesse Cornman Connie Ronnow
Elizabeth Crowell Deb Stracco
Sam Dammers Lou Valsoano
Janet Guevara Tom Wolford
Bob Haisman
Becky Kuntz

Church Julie Harley
Staff: Leah Fowler
Marylen Marty-Gentile
Special Ally Vertigan, Intern from
Guests: Elmhurst College

Moderator Laurie Jolicoeur called the meeting to order at 7:30 and opened the meeting with a prayer and song.

I. Sharing of Personal Practice of the Vision: In the form of a letter to new Council members, Megan Lewis shared observations, recommendations and reflections on her time on Council. She experienced new friendships and the mentorship of Laurie Jolicoeur and is looking forward to creating more intimate relationships through her work as a new Deacon.

II. Joys, Concerns and Remembrances: Several church couples are celebrating significant wedding anniversaries. Joy was expressed for the seminary graduation of Jeff Foels and for the confirmation of twelve Questers. Concerns involved issues surrounding aging parents and medical tests. We remembered the lives of Ida Hanson and Anne Robinson, sisters who were long-time members.

III. Omnibus Motion: Approval of two Council Minutes and Membership Report.

Action: the minutes of the April 20, 2010 Council meeting and May 2, 2010 Congregational Meeting, and the Membership Report were unanimously approved.
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Baptism: Hogan Mason Davis Porter, son of Josephine Porter and Renee Davis, brother of Emerson and Lillie

Deaths: Niece of Anna Sadowski

Transfer: Marilyn and Roger Scriven

IV. Big Picture Conversation – the Vision goes Viral

Julie Harley led us in a discussion of the many ways our church communicates with each other and with non-members: the Messenger Bell, website, bulletin boards, e-votionals, and more. She is increasingly aware that social media can play a vital role in the ways we communicate and to that end, the church now has a Facebook page and is creating a photo gallery on smugmug.com. Sermons are being recorded and podcasts will be available. A blog is in the works. It has become more important for our communicating to become two-way so that receivers can also comment and react. The church needs to make information available *as it happens*. There are still privacy and confidentiality issues being considered and the technology gap that impacts older members is a concern. Ultimately, however, her feeling is that any way we can get the word out about what our church believes and is doing enhances our outreach and even online, it is possible to create relationships. Council members provided some feedback and we will be hearing more about these developments as they occur.

V. Report from the Resident Mission Board

Rick Ashton is the Council liaison to this newly created Board. He reported that the purpose is to strengthen our relationships with the Food Pantry, Walk-in-Ministry, PADS, Clustor Tutoring and all the other mission groups based in our church. We want these relationships to be more than landlord-tenant and by developing them, we can hope to move from charity to changing structures. He will update us periodically.

VI. Agape House Partnership

Through the Chicago Presbytery, First United has a long history of support for Agape House, the campus ministry at UIC. This relationship kindles a move from words to witness as we participate, support and contribute to Agape's ministry.

Action: It was moved, seconded and approved to renew the Presbytery's Mission Covenant Partnership with Agape House.
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VII. Report from Finance Committee

Becky Kuntz, the Council liaison to the Finance Committee, reported that the Committee would like Finance to be on the agenda of every Council meeting because they want our opinion and input. Rick Pollock, the new chair of Finance, is creating a new "dashboard" that should make reading and understanding their reports easier.

Action: It was moved, seconded and approved to take from the table the Finance motion involving the dispersal of funds from the Women of the Church account.

Becky explained that the \$58,000 in the dormant Women of the Church treasury was intended to be dispersed to mission-related organizations or events. \$30,000 is being divided among several agencies with which we have had a relationship and the remaining \$28,000 is being put towards paying down the principal of the mortgage on the church. Because our building is used in so many ways for mission and outreach, the use of this money for that purpose is in line with the group's wishes.

Action: It was moved, seconded and approved to accept the Finance motion involving the dispersal of funds from the Women of the Church account.

In other Finance Committee news it was reported that thanks to an excess of money not used this past winter for gas and electricity, there is now a budget surplus. There is no shortage of projects and needs for this money. Finance has created an Emergency Funding Request procedure which allows for various levels of requested emergency moneys to be approved in a variety of ways (i.e. requests for less than \$1000 may be approved by the Lead Pastor, Financial Administrator and Finance Chairperson. Larger requests require higher levels of approval).

Action: It was moved, seconded and approved to accept the Finance motion to adopt an Emergency Funding Request procedure

Action: It was moved, seconded and approved to accept the following recommendations of the Finance Committee:

- Council will re-allocate the estimated excess funds in the utility accounts to the Budget Surplus Account.
- Council will defray the cost of the new hymnals by debiting the Music Program Fund.
- Council will approve the transfer of \$2000 from the Budget Surplus Account to the Computer Account to cover the cost of necessary computer work.
- Council will approve the expenditure of \$1200 from the Budget Surplus Account to cover the cost of increasing our presence in social media.
- Council will approve the transfer of \$15,000 from the Budget Surplus Account to Buildings and Grounds to cover the cost of necessary roof repair.

VIII. Vice Moderator's Report: Stu passed around the Elder on Duty sign-up sheet. He shared the very positive feedback received on the Council and Committee orientation held May 15. The FFUN committee needs two volunteers from Council to help with a shift at the Church Picnic.

IX. Moderator's Report: Laurie thanked Council for their 100% participation in the Crop Walk. First United raised \$11,880 and more money is still trickling in. Council committee assignments were shared. She explained that the vision needs to be "visual" and requested that we think of ways to make that happen, including taking pictures of committee events.

X. Staff Reports:

- **Julie** – reported that the Church Picnic Quilt of Love theme comes from the Vision Statement and represents the diversity of the church and its caring nature. This summer the fellowship time after worship will take place outside, weather permitting, giving us greater exposure. The Kenilworth neighbors are petitioning for street parking until midnight, which should help with our evening parking situation as well. In denominational news, the UCC has a candidate for Illinois Conference Minister. The Chicago Metropolitan Association is still searching for a Director. We are hosting a UCC boundary training for pastors in early June. McCormick Seminary's building is for sale. The Presbytery is also in dire financial shape. The camp at Saugatauk was bought by a religious consortium.
- **Marylen** – reported that there are 12 confirmands. She is half way through her in care process, leading to ordination. The last church school leader breakfast was fruitful.
- **Leah** – reported on an upcoming FUSH parent gathering and a substance abuse forum at OPRF. She will be attending several Chicago area continuing education events in the upcoming week.

XI. What did Council do tonight to live the Vision? We were intentional about looking at every agenda item with the Vision in mind.

We closed in a responsive prayer led by Laurie.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:20.

Respectfully submitted,
Beth Mrkvicka, Clerk

