

Minutes

Kent United Church of Christ Council Meeting (via Zoom)

March 23, 2021

Present: Jaime Baughman (past moderator), Karen Carmany, Becky Dunlap, Glenn Hanniford, Barb Hanniford, Donna Hess, John Hetrick, Sue Otterson (vice moderator), Jackie Peck, Grace Polcha (UYF), Jeff Roeger (moderator), Sally Saltzman, Dick Symons, Julie Wallace, Barb Werstler, Pastor Amy (ex officio), Pastor Kim (ex officio)

Jeff opened the meeting at 7 p.m. Sue gave an opening prayer, and Barb H. then read our mission statement.

Minutes Approval

The minutes of our February 23 meeting were approved (Becky, Donna).

Status of Payroll Protection Program (PPP) loan

Jeff reported that after looking more closely at the loan eligibility rules and our 2020 finances, we learned we do not qualify at this time for a 2021 PPP loan. Sally did a lot of work to determine our status.

Youth Council Report

Grace was introduced as the UYF representative to Council this year. She shared that UYF members were reading and discussing Trevor Noah's book, *Born a Crime*. They are also helping with the monthly community meal. Jackie asked if she thought that this book would be a good one for our whole congregation. Grace said she had not been aware of apartheid before reading the book and thought that the congregation could benefit from reading it. Jaime asked about a summer mission project. Pastor Kim said she had just polled parents, who favor an in-person activity. It will probably be a local project which will involve outdoor work and can be done safely.

Pastor Amy's report

Pastor Amy had provided a written report. She highlighted a few items, first encouraging us to look closely at our church website. A number of edits have been made recently, with more to come. Please let her know of any specific suggestions for improvement. There is now a specific drop-down menu item for lighting project contributions, she said. There is now a Council page that is password protected (password: belovedofgod). The Zoom meeting links will be there in the future, along with our monthly reports. The weekly update now appears under the "calendar" link.

Pastor Amy also mentioned upcoming Holy Week activities: palms available for Palm Sunday, "Upper Zoom" at 7 p.m. on Maundy Thursday, an association Good Friday service that will be available on YouTube, deliveries of communion elements (hot cross bun and grape juice), and an Easter service that will include bell ringing, our blessing vessels, the vase made up of our various shards, and more. She commented that when we do eventually return to indoor worship, we should recognize that it will not look the same as our previous services.

Treasurer's Report

The treasurer's report showed that through February, expenses were \$16,458 over income. Sally said that she is transferring in pre-paid pledge money monthly rather than quarterly. She is still working on reconciliation and looking at the balance sheets. We should have more accurate reporting in the future. Also, she commented that Engage is offering us the opportunity to add an option for people who contribute to cover the service fee. This will help to offset our credit card fees. She is exploring this option. She also said that she has moved \$100,000 into a money market account to earn a bit more interest.

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Dick is concerned about what our cash flow situation will look like. He would like to have some idea of our past trends (3-year average) for our various expense categories. Sally can work on this. After the first quarter, Dick will get the Finance Ministry together to look at fixed and variable costs. A question was raised about utilities. John said that the gas heat bill will go down after winter.

New Business

Lighting Project Funding

Jeff reviewed what we had voted on at our December 6 special congregational meeting. Sally reported that to date, we have received contributions of over \$5,500 despite not launching any formal fund-raising effort. The project will cost about \$75,000, and we had an additional \$5,000 cushion budgeted. We have only paid a quarter thus far. Jeff reminded us that it is Council's responsibility to oversee a campaign. Theme ideas involving lights (e.g., a light bulb graphic, "This Little Light of Mine," etc.) were suggested.

After discussion of how to proceed with fund raising, we made the following decisions:

- We will begin with an inspiring letter to the congregation sent via email and snail mail. This will come from our past moderator, current moderator, and vice moderator. Jeff will initiate this after Easter. Pastor Amy can help with this letter.
- We need a sub-group to promote and track the fund raising and do follow-up and thank you notes. (Sally has already begun thanking donors.) Julie, Becky, Sally, Karen, and Barb W. agreed to do be part of this group.
- Pastor Amy thought that Kelley Gifford could do some type of graphic as the funds are raised. Also, someone could record a promotional message that could be shown during worship.
- Eventually we will want a celebration and dedication of the new lights.

Special Council Meeting March 22

Jeff asked for feedback on our Special Council meeting with Rev. Karjian. Overall it was positive—we liked how a new structure would be tied to our strategic vision, its focus on mission, how it had some flexibility, and how we would actually have more opportunities for involvement with the Ministry/Leadership Coordination group. We appreciated knowing that Nayiri would guide us as we worked through the change process. When we tried to make some governance changes several years ago, we needed more support in implementation. Pastor Kim commented that we have already been moving in this new direction; we have a vision, we have groups that meet without Council representation, and our meetings do not consist of reporting out. Pastor Amy shared that when Nariyi first came to Council three years ago, we weren't ready to make the changes that she suggested. Sue recommended that it may be helpful to put names onto the diagram to see how it fits us. Other comments included a need for a job description for the Leadership team. We already have job descriptions for Council and for officers.

The following motion was made (Dick, Barb W.) and approved:

We will appoint a small group to begin meeting with Rev. Nayiri Karjian, Living Association General Minister, to explore aligning our governance model with our mission, vision, and strategic plan.

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Barb W. will contact Nayiri to set up meetings and to ask for some direction on the small group's makeup. We will then need to form the group.

Ongoing Business

Stewardship in all we do! – Quarterly Budget Process

Sue did not have much to add to her written report. Dick said he needs clearer definition between the Budget and Finance Ministries. The Bylaws should provide some clarity. Jaime reminded us that the Budget Ministry's only role at this point is to periodically review the budget to see if funds might be available to move toward our approved contingency budget. The vice moderator can invite others (such as the Stewardship Ministry chair) to attend meetings.

For the Good of the Group/Highlights:

- Council members were encouraged to attend the workshop series on Martin Luther King Jr. that Sunny Matthews will be leading.
- Jackie also encouraged us to attend the Mental Health series.
- We were all asked to encourage people to use Engage and to "talk church"

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m. with a blessing from Pastor Amy. Our next regular meeting will be **Tuesday, April 27** at 7 p.m. via Zoom.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Hanniford, Clerk