Congregational Church of Middlebury, UCC
Church Council Meeting
January 12, 2022
MINUTES


The meeting was called to order by Katy at 7:05. Andy started the opening prayer by saying he is happy we are together, even if it is by Zoom in a pandemic. He gave blessings for Katy Smith Abbott, and for Rich Carpenter for all their good work. He is grateful to have Elizabeth back at work.

It was moved, seconded and so voted to approve the Church Council Meeting Minutes from December 8, 2021.

Cathy Chase said the Treasurer's report is part of the report Rich Carpenter will be giving with the presentation of the 2022 Budget. She asked if there were any question, and there were none.

Elizabeth was welcomed back by Katy. She said it was good to be back. She reported that she will be sharing the leadership of the mid-week prayer group with Andy. Elizabeth said she will be holding a group study on Thursdays in February by Zoom. They will be reading and discussing the book "Be the Brave One." It is a contemporary memoir by a NY city clergy member Ann Kansfield. She is working with Jennifer with the Confirmation class, and is getting caught up with things like pastoral care.

Andy started his report by saying it has been great to have Elizabeth back. They are well into the quiet phase of the Campaign to Retire the Debt. They are planning this summer’s Senior Youth service trip. If it all comes together it will be a good opportunity to work on rehab of a home and helping families in need. He is still working with the administration and other parents at the Middle School. The week of full-time work on his Doctoral program is coming up. It will be an intense week and is being held in Florida. As much as he would like to work with fellow students in person, he has decided to not travel to Florida and will be doing everything from home on Zoom. Advent and Christmas services went well. He is especially grateful for the excellent music program at the Christmas Eve services.

Katy turned the meeting to Board reports.

Gail reported for Membership that they are in the process of interviewing, photographing and writing biographical articles on the new Church Members. They will be reviewing the list of Church Members in the next few months, in an effort to keep it up to date.
Robin reported for Pastoral Care that they distributed the gift bags before Christmas and poinsettias after Christmas, and that it was very meaningful to the people who received these gifts.

Michelle reported for Christian Development that they had a discussion about new board members and about the Junior Youth Group.

Dorothy reported for Deacons that all is going well with worship services and the hand book is updated. She also said that the safety meeting with a Middlebury Police officer is still going to happen sometime in the next few months.

Bronwen reported for Mission and Social Concerns that they allotted the rest of the large 2020 gift, and they had a discussion about the number of members they needed on their Board. In response to a question from Janet, she said she really did not know why so many of the vouchers they gave out were not used. She said she would follow up with the organizations they gave them to for distribution to see if she could answer that question.

Rich Carpenter joined the meeting.

John asked how much was raised from the Christmas Eve offering. Cathy responded that it was about $3,100 which was evenly split between the two organizations that were the recipients.

The motion that was proposed by the Nominating Committee to amend Section X. A. of the Church By-Laws to reduce membership on three Boards was moved and seconded. There was a good discussion of the proposal. John started the discussion with a number of reasons why this motion is not a good idea at this time. His arguments were endorsed by Nancy and Ruth. The motion was defeated. It was decided that Michelle Brown, Chair of the Nominating Committee, would be invited to a future meeting to have further discussion on this topic.

It was moved, seconded, and so voted to approve the proposed Warning for the January 30, 2022 Annual Meeting which will be held in person and/or by Zoom.

It was moved, seconded, and so voted to hold the January 26, 2022 All Boards meeting by Zoom.

It was moved, seconded, and so voted to rename the firehouse room the Russell Carpenter Room in honor of our long-time dedicated Church Moderator.

Katy turned the meeting over to Andy to start the discussion of the Digital Content Creator Position. Andy stated that Jakkee Zaccor has done an excellent job in this position, but he thinks we don’t really need someone in this position on a regular basis. He thinks we should be using this person more strategically. There are a few times during the year when we really need the assistance provided by this position. The annual campaign in October is an example of this.

Andy
said we still have $4,000 left of the money we allocated for the position, and that should carry us through 2022. Andy plans to have a talk with Jakkee tomorrow about this change.

Katy turned the meeting over to Rich Carpenter to report on the year end financial statement and the 2022 Budget. Rich started his report by stating that 2021 financials ended much better than he had thought they would just a few months ago. We ended the year with a surplus of $22,437 that we are carrying over into the 2022 Budget. Unbudgeted gifts plus lower than planned expenses contributed to the surplus for 2021.

Rich reported on the uses of the 2021 contingency budget item. He also reported on the decision to award end-of-year bonuses to our two pastors and seven staff members. He reported that the $2,000 not used for major maintenance items was moved to the Special Fund for Church Maintenance to be used as needed for future projects.

The committee set an unpublished goal of raising $446,000 in pledges for 2022, and Rich is happy to report that they raised about $10,000 more than that. There were 191 pledges which is a 92% participation rate. With the success of the pledge campaign, they were able to balance the budget, with a small surplus of $396. All employees were given a 5% cost of living increase in their salaries, and there was a 3% increase in other items impacted by inflation. There were a few other increases in the budget, and the committee eliminated the $11,214 contribution to the addition in anticipation of the success of raising $450,000 in the Retire the Debt Capital Campaign which will completely pay off all borrowing for the addition.

Rich thanked all the people who worked with him during this entire process. Katy thanked Rich and his group for all their hard work. She asked for additional questions from Council. John asked what is included in the line item “Unplanned gifts” and Rich explained. In response to another question, Rich explained that they no longer draw on earning from the Care and Maintenance of the Church Building Account. Because of its strong earnings and growth, the Fiscal Account is able to provide budget support that is at about the same level as it had been when both of the accounts were supporting the Annual Budget.

It was moved, seconded, and so voted to approve the 2022 Church Budget as presented. John explained the need for the following motion which he made: In the happy event that funds raised in our Campaign to Retire the Debt were to exceed the goal of $450,000, the additional funds will be invested in the Care and Maintenance of Church Building Account. The motion was seconded, and so voted.

Under other concerns, Janet asked about the public use of the Church restrooms. Andy said he has heard nothing further about this project.

Elizabeth pointed out that this in the last Council Meeting that Katy will be chairing. There was a resounding show of gratitude from all Council Members for everything Katy has done and for her outstanding leadership in the past couple years.
The meeting was adjourned at 8:40.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Foster
Clerk