MIDDLEBURY CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING

May 11, 2022

MINUTES


Leanna called the meeting to order at 7:02. Elizabeth led us in an opening prayer and asked us if we had concerns. She asked God to bless us on this beautiful day, and lead us in our work tonight.

It was moved, seconded and so voted to approve the Minutes of the April 6 and April 13 Council Meetings as printed.

Cathy was asked if there was anything she wanted to add. Hearing none, it was moved, seconded and so voted to approve the Treasurers report as distributed.

Andy started his report explaining why he was on Zoom this evening. There is a lot coming up in the next 7 or 8 weeks. This Sunday, he will be at Ella’s graduation so he will not be here. This Sunday will be teacher appreciation. Jo and David Cole awards will be later this month. Andi Lloyd will preach May 29 for the last time this year. June 5 is Confirmation Sunday and Andi’s Ordination will be at 3:00 that afternoon. Jennifer Smith will be doing the sermon the next Sunday. Students that go on the High School Service trip will be doing much of the service the first Sunday in July.

Elizabeth reported that on June 12 at 3:00 Elliot will be installed as Minister in Vergennes, and Lydia will be baptized during that service. She and Jennifer are leading Jennifer’s last confirmation class. She is currently leading a book class on Tuesday at noon by Zoom. She will report with Ellen on the Child Care Center Proposal under new business.

Board reports.

Bronwen reported for Missions and Social Concerns. They allocated a good part of their budget at the last meeting. Andy talked with the Board about how the money comes to their Board. At the next board meeting they will be looking at some action projects. She will be gone in August for the fall semester, so will be looking for a new Board Chair while she is away.
Michelle reported for Christian Development. Many of the highlights from their meeting have been covered. They will make sure all goes well for all the celebrations at the end of the year. They had preliminary conversations about how things will be structured with Jennifer’s replacement. They discussed the need to update the role of their Board.

Gail reported for Membership. Andy came to their meeting also. He asked their board to host monthly potlucks after Church services. They will be doing this on the second Sunday of every month starting in September. A hospitality table will be set up in the near future. They need appetizers for Andi Lloyd’s reception. Andy thought we should also have dessert—Cookies or something like that. Gail said they would have cookies and fruit in addition to the appetizers.

Elizabeth updated us on the gifts for Andi. There will be one item from the Church staff, one from the discernment committee, and two more from the Church.

Margaret reported for Pastoral Care. The back-to-back receptions last month went well. They are continuing visiting people and celebrating older Church members birthdays with cards.

Ian reported for the Trustees. They are continuing repair work on the building. They are trying to nail down contractors and prices. Repointing of the chimney will be significant. They are moving forward with the solar panels—working on getting the permits. Hoping to get project on the roof in June, but there are many factors that could delay this timetable. He is not sure when the columbarium will get started. Mel reported that our insurance agent is being changed—same company, just rotating to a different agent.

Michele Brown reported for Deacons. They did a review of the Holy Week services. They spent time discussing how to continue the mask policy. They will continue as is through the middle of June, when windows can be open. They will revisit the policy again in June.

New Business

Andy started the report on the new Director of Children and Youth Ministries. The search committee has selected a person to move forward. It has been a lovely process. He has reported to both people who were interviewed. Christen Development will interview the candidate next week. He is very excited about the candidate we have. We may need a special Council meeting to get the new person on staff before Jennifer leaves. Ian asked if we need to revise the job description in any way. Andy said that is something that will be an ongoing discussion. We will most likely be hiring the new person for 20 to 25 hours. The Search Committee has been awesome. We are in as good a situation as we could have hoped for.

Andy updated us on the HOPE Fund. It is a Vt. UCC process to raise $200,000 for the conference. They have raised $56,000 so far. We will have a special collection of June 5th. We are seen as a Church that has the ability to make a difference. We have 3 projects out right now. We need to be creative. There is another committee that is assessing the projects that this will be spent on. There is optimism about reaching our goal but it is going to be very difficult. Churches are looking
to link local congregations to their community. Elizabeth mentioned that we will notify people about the special collection.

Andy reported on the youth service trip. We set a budget for the trip before we even knew where the group is going. We need more flexibility in planning for the service trip. This year the per person expense is about $700 and we are charging $500 for each participant. Andy needs access to funds for renting things for the trip. It is going to cost more than is in the budget. We need to have a different way to budget for these trips. Cathy said we have $18,000 in a fund for these trips. Andy said we just need a different way of budgeting for this. Ian suggested that we need to be more flexible in our budget.

Child Care Exploratory Workgroup reported on their work to date. Ellen reviewed the doc that is now in our google docs. Bill Miller, our attorney, suggested that we should have a separate non-profit corporation to shield the Church from liability. There are 3 pillars for a good childcare system: access, cost, and employment. These pillars are really difficult. We need about 370 spots for young children in Addison County. As a committee, they have landed on 7 program model goals. If we go for all of them, the cost becomes astronomical. It would be unsustainable, even if we could get it up and running. Gail asked about the average cost for students in a day care center.

Thoughts about financing were discussed. Both infrastructure costs and sustainability costs were covered. Ellen reported that they are not planning on the Church covering deficiencies, but that does not mean they would not ask if they need help. The estimate is over $300,000 to upgrade the building. They discussed fundraising proposals. There was discussion of the current use of the rooms that we would be using for the childcare center. Discussed outside play area. Some of the upgrades are things that would be very beneficial to the church.

Elizabeth talked about the next steps. The big item is financing. They are also looking at grants that we could apply for—Ginny Sinclair has a good handle on this. Could the Church be our fiscal agent so that we could use the Church’s 503c status? If we apply for grants before the Church has officially approved, Council would have to approve. Elizabeth talked about some of the ways other childcare centers fund their programs. She said we need to reach out to Church members to keep the congregation informed on what is happening. They will be sending lots of emails to Church members. We need to seek Church approval as soon as possible. Elizabeth thinks we could have a proposal for the Church by mid or late June.

We need to warn a meeting very soon. It would be a hybrid meeting and that might help the attendance. Janet Franklin joined the meeting and had a question about the upgrades to the building. Elizabeth gave a brief rundown of the necessary upgrades. There was more discussion of the costs, both start up and long term. Ellen said they will have a deficit at least in the first few years, so really need a sustaining fund to cover these costs for a least the first few years. There was a discussion of the expansion of other child care centers in Middlebury.

Ellen and Elizabeth will be supplying us with more information in the next week or so.
Leanna asked us to check mailboxes. Make sure you are uploading all the minutes onto the google drive or email them to Judy.

It was moved, seconded and so voted to adjourn the meeting at 9:00.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Foster, Clerk