MIDDLEBURY CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING

September 14, 2022

MINUTES


Leanna opened the meeting at 7:02. Andy started with an opening prayer which talked about not having boundaries that excluded anyone, and the value of sharing food at a table together.

It was moved, seconded, and so voted to approve the Minutes of the July 13, 2022 Church Council Meeting,

Leanna turned to the Treasurer’s Report, and asked for questions. Cathy pointed out that the corrected June report is now on google drive. Andy asked about a couple line items. It was moved, seconded and so voted to approve the Treasurer’s reports for July and August.

Pastor Andy started the staff reports. It has been a lovely 6 weeks since he returned from vacation. Senior High Youth Group starts this Sunday. The third Sunday of every month they will have a meal together. There are over 20 students in the group he thinks. He is sharing leadership with a large group which includes Pete Nelson, Diane Monroe and Tara Affolter. He has been spending a lot of time working on the stewardship campaign. Jakee Zaccor will be interviewing Church members about the things in the Church they are grateful for. This is the furthest along they have been in this process at this time, which he is happy about. The self-evaluation for the staff has been sent out, and this is the first step in their annual review. He hopes to have meetings with staff members the first week in October. Personal committee is made up of the 3 at-large members of Council. Andy also announced that they are working on a handbook for all things financial in this Church—he is very excited to have this. It will be a benefit for our Church for a long time.

Elizabeth started her report with reporting that we have a confirmation class of 2. The class will be starting next month. The New Light service is starting again. It will be once a month—the third Sunday of every month. It will not be on Zoom. Adult education will have 4 different classes in the next 4 month. Elizabeth is doing the first class which will start in October. James Davis and Al Zaccor will jointly present a class on masculinity in Christianity. Andy will be doing a bible study in November.

Eliana’s job description is being revised. Eilanna is 20 hours per week (Jennifer was at 30 hours). It will look more like Jennifer’s job did quite a few years ago. Eliana will keep track of her hours
and will see if she really can do the job in 20 hours. All staff is year to year. Elianna will not be evaluated at this time, since she has only been employed 4 weeks.

Elizabeth and Ellen gave a short update on the Child Care Center. They haven’t meet in a month or so, but will have a detailed report next month. Everything is moving in different directions. In response to a question from Ian, they do not have a target date because they don’t have contractors to get the work done. They also need to have more conversations in the Church about the use of space. One remaining question is where the Junior High kids are going to have their space. They also are being careful about who they hire to work on the building because they only want really good contractors.

Board reports: Robin Bentley reported for Pastoral Care. They are lining up rides for members who need them and are checking for Covid. They are low on money—only $31 left, and will need more before the end of the year. They just found they can get more money, but don’t totally understand the process. Michele said it will come out of the contingency fund.

Michelle Nelson reported for Christian Education. They will also like knowing about how the money works. The Welcome Sunday barbeque went well. Getting the nursery open was a job. They have 4 10th graders rotating staffing the nursery. Judy Jessup will be managing all this. They are making a handout for parents. The students will be paid by the hour. Michelle gave a thank you to the Franklins for use of their property for the barbeque. 85 to 90 people were in attendance at the Sunday barbeque. They are helping with Eliana’s job description and trying to be supportive.

Gail Hietzker reported for Membership. Welcome Sunday went really well. They are evaluating the visitor’s table. They will be starting the monthly pot luck in October. There will be some fun group activities. New Member Sunday is November 13. They will do an activity around the new members.

Helmut Hietzker reported for Mission and Social Concerns. Food deliveries to HOPE are continuing. Leanna will be stepping in to help the Board during a period of leadership transition.

Ian Phair reported for Trustees. Columbarium is supposed to be arriving very soon. Window repair job is moving more slowly than he had anticipated. The insurance provider is no longer willing to service the northeast, so they are looking for a new company. Estimates are coming in much higher than current insurance.

Michele Brown reported for Deacons. They had a lot of conversation about whether Deacons should be masked. They were not masked this summer—there is more air flow in the building, etc. Every deacon decides if they want to wear a mask or not. If Covid gets worse, they might have to go back to masking. They discussed needing more sound and recording people. They are hoping to get some senior youth group members to help with these jobs.
New Business: Mal said he plans to start involving others in the sorting of documents on October 1. They are still trying to find where all documents are hidden. They will sort in chronological order. We have bulletins going back to 1915. When we are done, we will have put things in order. The end result will be to decide what to keep and where to store it. There was a discussion about what to look for. Ian asked if we have things that have special value. John Wallace did an evaluation of some of our things a few years ago, and yes, we do have some valuable items.

Michele made a nomination for the membership and communication board which has a vacancy since Eliana has resigned. She nominated Stephanie Mitchell who joined the Church this spring, and is willing to fill out Eliana’s term until the end of January. It was moved, seconded and so voted to appoint Stephanie Mitchell to fill out Eliana’s position.

Andy told us about Gareth Higgins who is an author and professor. He was one of Andy’s professors this summer. He would like to come to Vermont. He is a brilliant story teller. He will be in the region in November. If he comes to our Church, he would do a free public talk on November 11. He is excited about working with a smaller group of Church members, and he would do that the next morning. He grew up during the Troubles in Northern Ireland. Andy thinks he would connect well with people in this Church. It will cost between $3,000 and $5,000 to get him here. Andy needs to let him know very soon. Ellen asked how his presentation will fit in with the general themes Andy and Elizabeth are concentrating on this year. Andy thinks he will be able to address things that are going on in the world right now. His book is about how not to be afraid, and that is needed right now. He has a big audience. He will be selling his books at the event. He is funny and thoughtful. After a short discussion, it was decided that the money could come from the New Initiatives fund. It was moved, seconded and so voted to spend up to $5,000 from the New Initiatives fund to pay for Gareth Higgins to come to Middlebury.

Leanna asked board chairs to consider any changes needed to the by-laws for their respective boards. Council will need to discuss any proposed changes in October or November in order to be on the agenda for the Annual Meeting. Since there are 2 holidays at the end of the month in November and December, she asked us to set up the meeting schedule for those months. Church Council will be on November 9, and All Boards the following Wednesday, November 16. December will have Council on December 14, and All Boards on December 21.

On Monday, Andy and Andi Lloyd signed a book contract. It is a book of letters that they wrote in 2020. It should be coming out in the winter of 2023.

It was moved, seconded and so voted to adjourn at 8:42.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Foster, Clerk