

**First Congregational Church United Church of Christ (FCCUCC) of Colorado Springs**  
**Minutes of the Council Meeting**  
**October 8, 2020, via Zoom**

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Council Members in Attendance:

Bill Kemp (Moderator)  
Paul McNeill (Vice Moderator)  
Lisa Mason (Secretary)  
Margaret Reiber (Care & Fellowship)  
Wayne Bland (Outreach)  
Adam Gibbs (Worship & Spiritual Life)

(Transitional Minister)

Ex Officio Absent:

Rev. Jacque Franklin  
(Minister of Pastoral Care)

Guests:

Elizabeth Shelton (Member in Discernment)  
Phyllis Rhinehart & Elizabeth Vincent (Members in discernment Support Team)  
Ruth Roland (FCC Accountant)

Council Members Absent:

Polly Strovink (Treasurer)  
Laura Pfender (Education)

Ex Officio in Attendance:

Dr. Donald Longbottom

**Opening Prayer:** Dr. Don

**Meeting called to order** - 6:05 pm

**MINUTES:**

Lisa updated the Council on the corrections to the September Minutes that were noted upon the Council's review through the past month.

**MOTION:** Paul moved that the minutes for this meeting be approved as updated/amended. Margaret seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously via hand-vote

**NEW BUSINESS:**

• **Outdoor Services:**

- Bill Kemp has gone to both outdoor services and has been happy with turnout
- there have been 100-110 at the second service with 50-80 at the first service.
- Two services per outdoor Sundays seem to be a good structure so far. Council discussed how we might decide if the weather won't be suitable and the consensus was to get a group to confer and then put out an e-blast.
- Paul recommended Bill and Don come to the Church Reopening Committee to discuss what weather criteria would be the driving factors and who might be the group that would decide.

- Dr. Don wanted to compliment how the Church Reopening Committee has handled our first reported COVID case.
- **Youth Director position:**
  - Bill announced that Josh Rumble has been hired.
  - An E-blast went out today. Josh has the right skill set and demeanor.
  - His start date is this upcoming Tuesday. He will need to meet with Ruth to sign paperwork.
- **Annual Appeal:**
  - The Appeal will be starting later this month and Council will be discussing the budget tonight. We discussed what would be best to put in the e-blast to inform the congregation of our current status so that the congregation feels informed in relation to the Annual Appeal.
  - Dr. Don believes Ruth suggested a once-a-month schedule of informing the congregation but with more information than just a bare outline (however without disclosing personnel costs).
  - Dr. Don also wants to experiment with people receiving a notice as to what they have pledged (rather than just having people access it on Fellowship One.)

## TRANSITIONAL LEAD MINISTER

- Dr. Don stated he chose to light the fuse for pledges by stating in the Primo Congo Weekly (eblast) that we need to increase giving by 12%.
  - The theme for giving is “**Who do we say that we are**”.
  - The church will mail out pledge letters first then 10/25 is the third stewardship sermon with testimonials.
  - After Oct 25 is when Council will be called on to make follow-up calls.
  - On Nov. 1, Gratitude Sunday, will be the Pivot Point sermon which is the official climax of the Appeal.
- Dr. Don stated that Just Peace is a vehicle of renewal for this church and Jill Robinson has agreed to chair Just Peace with Wayne Bland, Margaret Reiber, and AniRose Whaleswan actively joining the team.
  - Don wants to have Just Peace move into advocacy and action issues, social justice issues, with Non Violent Communication as the foundation.
  - Dr. Don expressed that just writing checks is not the only leg of Social Justice, hands on advocacy must be the other leg.
  - He believes this church can bridge far left and far right issues in this community.
- The Micah Study Zoom meetings on Tuesday night took a deep dive and it is going very well. Bible Study Zoom meetings on Thursday is going well too.
- Dr. Don continues to feel really good about staff. He stated that happy staff equal a happy church. They work well together as a team.

- Dr. Don received feedback that stated that he and Bill hold too much power about opening/reopening the church and that that decision needs to be made at the Council level.
- Dr. Don said we received a bill from ESM for \$5k and wonders what that bill is for. See Wayne's comments below.

## **MINISTRY AREAS:**

### **CARE AND FELLOWSHIP (MARGARET REIBER):**

- Margaret reported that it has been a busy month with over 100 congregants having received Kindness Balms.
- Communion packets were delivered to 76 households (112 individuals) in the Silver Threads 75 years and older group.
- Patty White will help create Thanksgiving cards to be mailed to shut-ins.
- Some members of the Visitation Ministry are available if members have other needs.
- A Christmas project for shut-ins involving children is being planned. Everything else is listed in Margaret's report.

### **OUTREACH (WAYNE BLAND):**

- Wayne thanked Dr. Don for organizing Just Peace.
- Wayne gave some history about MG&O's history with ESM. For many years Senior Ministers of the downtown churches collaborated to assist with ESM and later on served as board members.
  - This model functioned well for 30 years but ESM started struggling about 5 years ago.
  - Recently the director of ESM, Ann Lantz, took an out-of-town job and since then ESM has folded.
  - MG&O has had, in the past, a line item of approximately \$5k per year of support to ESM which was discontinued when ESM folded. First Presbyterian said they need that money to finalize/wrap-up expenses.
  - The loss of ESM has left a large gap in the homeless community. MG&O has since been looking around for who is filling that gap.
  - WestSide Cares has taken on a lot of that responsibility plus many of those clients have had to go over there to get services. WestSide Cares recommended FCC become a member (no financial obligation) of West Side Cares as a church member.
  - A couple MG&O members have already filled board positions on WestSide Cares.
  - The \$5k that First Presbyterian wants was rejected by MG&O per Karen Muise and Steve Felts. A thorough discussion ensued with the crux being that ESM/the remaining Executive Committee needs to be more forthcoming/communicative and transparent of what any bills are for and what the plans are for the ESM building.

- It was a consensus that the Council needs more itemization of this bill but that the Council philosophically supports continuing to support the closing of the finances for ESM.
- Margaret asked how the bill for InterFaith Alliance membership will be paid.
  - It was first suggested that the \$2k should be paid from Just Peace (JP) funds. Dr. Don authorized it for JP since JP is in transition. (which will necessitate a budget increase).
  - Ruth suggested instead to pay for the membership from the advocacy funds available to the Council.
  - **MOTION: Margaret moved and Wayne seconded that the InterFaith Alliance membership be paid from the advocacy funds of the Council. The motion passed unanimously via hand vote.** (That will leave \$2k in the advocacy budget for Council)

### **WORSHIP AND SPIRITUAL LIFE (ADAM GIBBS):**

- Adam reported that the main tasks of the team are the time-consuming tasks of video-editing especially with this team now tackling video-editing for the upcoming Christmas Mystery.
- The Mystery will be a virtual ensemble including a Carol Ensemble.
- **Members in Discernment Team:** Elizabeth Vincent introduced Liz Shelton.
  - Elizabeth explained that she appreciated Liz's rationale for discernment.
  - She has been impressed by Liz's direction for a ministry career. Elizabeth says Liz is very open to growth and has interesting ideas for church growth. Her passion stands out.
  - Elizabeth states we (the Council and the Congregation) should support Liz in her discernment. Liz will let Phyllis define how the committee gives that support.
  - Liz then spoke stating she has been studying at Iliff for her Master of Divinity.
  - She has 6 kids - 3 each from two marriages; 4 teenagers are still at home while two have moved out of the house.
  - Liz has been attending First Congregational Church for 5 years but just became a member a year ago. She is working at Broadmoor Community as Faith Formation Coordinator.
  - She trained as an orchestral musician and has been with the Colorado Springs Philharmonic.
  - She has been interested in seminary her whole life.
  - Her first call came in her teenage years but she was told that she was just a girl and therefore could probably only teach Sunday School. She participated extensively in Bible Quiz-offs. She was divorced in 2014 leading to a faith deconstruction period which led her to FCC when a friend suggested FCC as Liz said she was looking for a more progressive church community. She loves passing the peace.

- Liz described UCC as a denomination that has such a breadth of space for theological opinions.
- She has a transgender son so she wants to address this area especially in the context of a youth ministry position which surprises her because she really sees herself as being into her head/being intellectual about it all, but she wants to address the next generation that is turning away due to a lack of relevance to social issues.
- She says she is definitely being called to being ordained. The Discernment Team recommends Liz for discernment.
- **MOTION:** Paul moved and Lisa seconded that FCC support Liz in her journey of discernment. The motion passed unanimously via hand vote.

#### **CORE RESOURCES (PAUL MCNEILL):**

- Paul invited Ruth to have a discussion about our current policy of restricted funds from endowments.
  - Ruth explained that when the church receives undesignated funds, traditionally half goes to the 7 Pillars (at Pikes' Peak Community Foundation) and half to pay down debt.
  - FCC has received only \$400k in permanently restricted endowment funds in the HISTORY of the church.
  - Endowment funds provide a steady stream of regular income from them. Without that steady stream, we are overly reliant on the ebb and flow of an annual appeal. We also don't have any other steady source of income.
  - Some churches have a parking lot or rooms for outside meetings to rent.
  - Endowments also can help with creating long-term legacies.
  - Ruth recommends we create planned capital budgets (eg., a Capital Campaign Fund and a Building and Grounds Fund) and maintain how bequests are currently managed.
  - And we should probably add a line item to the budget for capital projects (which are to purchase any item above \$2500 that has a useful life of more than one year).
  - We would continue both building endowment funds and building funds for capital maintenance.
- Regarding the Stewardship and Annual Appeal, Ruth explained that some appeals are run in a transactional manner and some in a relational manner.
  - Ruth says we have been running our campaigns in a relational manner for the last few years.
  - Ruth believes that we need to express extreme gratitude and to invite all potential pledge-givers into the mission of the church.
- Regarding the budget, it was suggested we add a 1% line item to the budget for capital maintenance. Dr. Don will then create a narrative budget to accompany the proposed numbers that will be presented to the Congregation.

Adjourned by consensus at 9:20

(No prayer or meeting evaluation due to time limitations.)

Respectfully submitted by Lisa A Mason, Council Secretary

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Lisa A Mason, Council Secretary

Bill Kemp, Council Moderator