

**First Congregational Church United Church of Christ (FCCUCC) of Colorado Springs**  
**Minutes of the Council Meeting**  
**May 14, 2020 via Zoom**

---

Council Members in Attendance:

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

Ex Officio in Attendance:

Dr. Donald Longbottom  
(Transitional Minister)

Ex Officio Absent:

Rev. Jacque Franklin  
(Minister of Pastoral Care)  
Glenda Laveck (Director of Financial  
Ministries) - called in sick

Council Members Absent: None

Guests: None

Prayer: Dr. Don

**Meeting called to order - 6:06 pm**

**MINUTES**

Margaret Reiber moved the March minutes be approved as corrected. Laura Pfender seconded.

Margaret Reiber moved the April minutes be approved as corrected. Paul McNeill seconded.

The motions passed via unanimous voice vote except Wayne Bland recused himself due to his association with Kirkpatrick bank as recorded in the April minutes.

**NEW BUSINESS**

- The budget:
  - o Bill commented that the church has enough funding for 7 months of the original budgeting costs as projected in January.
  - o Polly commented that the church has received \$137k from the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) from the Small Business Administration (SBA). The rules establishing what portion of that will be forgiven have not yet been established. Some guidance has been given but that guidance has changed regularly. If we adopt a "bare bones budget", we currently have a shortfall of \$8k in giving.
  - o There was consensus that we announce to the congregation the amount of giving to the Raise the Roof campaign once the campaign time frame is finished.

- Paul stated that his conversations with congregants say we are generally headed in the right direction and that's why the money has materialized.
- Margaret recommends we not lose sight of the hurt feelings that people have had to go through.
- Dr. Don's Zoom meeting with LGBTQ community established that we are probably getting out of the "emergency room," but now we need to address the sense of the congregation and get the people talking together (probably with a blitzkrieg of Zoom mtgs.) He believes he can employ Rich Law for this. It might also be successful facilitating various common-interest groups and engaging them with intentionality. Dr. Don stated the "prognosis for the patient is good".
- Bill stated that his priority was communicating well, listening and transparency, and these objectives dovetail well with Dr. Don's intended directions.
  - Bill says we need to do little actions, ie., make sure Council Members respond to each email we get from anyone to at least let them know we are listening.
  - Margaret stated she tried to call many congregants who have left the church and many LGBTQ congregants. She said many state that this is the first time they have been contacted. There is still a theme of perceived insensitivity so Council must strive to change that with an "all hands on deck" attitude.
  - We MUST thank ALL that have given in the Raise the Roof campaign. Stewardship Committee and Council both can assist with calling/thanking everyone who has contributed to the campaign.
  - Dr. Don has written a thank you to all who have given and that will be sent via email. Council usually signs thank-you notes at the beginning of Council meetings which hasn't been done due to the lack of our being physically present with each other due to COVID.
  - We still need to find a way to thank people individually/in person for instance, we on Council should send thank you cards to the staff. Council should step up and say thank you to the givers.
  - Wayne has heard from two folks that their church has contacted them just to say hi, to say how are you and are you okay.
  - Connie Raub sent out, with Margaret's assistance, almost 500 cards for Easter.
  - We should do a call-out just to say *Hi*.
  - Margaret would like to take this on and have Stephen Ministers and the visitation teams make the contact calls. Margaret said she could also engage Elizabeth Vincent who is the Interim Minister for Pastor Jacque's sabbatical.

- REOPENING:

- Council members also discussed how we re-open the church after COVID quarantines. Strategically we will need to pay attention to CDC guidelines and Paul will lead the Reopening Task Force - a group to develop the tactical measures.
  - Rev. Sue Artt, Executive Director of Rocky Mountain Conference (RMC), has a 10-page document that poses a series of questions regarding how to do this. It is lengthy, thorough, and practical.
  - Dr. Don expressed concern about the CDC and the Governor's guidelines because they have been politicized and Dr. Don is not as willing to have them be the guidelines to build off of. Aside from the prudential considerations, we must also ask philosophically why we are reopening-what need are we filling in doing so. What is the impact of this virus on children? And, how do we maintain social distancing for them.
  - Both Dr. Don and Jacque are uncomfortable preaching inside a closed sanctuary. Even with those concerns, having a preparatory plan should be done to have us be ready for whenever we "get there".
  - Dr. Don would like to see a Survey Monkey that gets a sense of this/to test the water of everyone's opinion of when they think we should open and why. We need to consider adding new equipment and manpower to get the online recordings/broadcasts done where David Acton (Music Director) is going live and therefore cannot also be handling the video as he's been doing up until now.
  - We discussed the contrast between worship vs fellowship/community.
  - We are doing a very professional job at the first but maybe we do fellowship meetings in homes of 8-10 or 8-10 congregants in open air (or 8-10 on Zoom) to do fellowship/community to create a place of belonging in a viral environment.
- Until we have a vaccine, we probably can't have a choir. Significant discussion ensued about these topics.
- Paul wants to ask for a budget to buy thermometers. He estimates they will cost \$75-100 per piece. He's considering approximately ten of them. Polly said yes. We would be trying to get everyone's temperature as they are coming in the door so need it would need to be quick to register.

## **MINISTRY AREA REPORTS:**

### **Care and Fellowship (Margaret Reiber):**

- Margaret stated that Stephen Ministry leaders are making phone calls to stay in touch with the congregation. There were 3 Stephen Ministers that were in the middle of completing their training and due to COVID have not been able to finish.
- When we are allowed to meet (10 or less) they will be finish their training.

- 7 member congregants that have had no contact with the Church have been recommended to be taken off the membership list.

#### **Education (Laura Pfender):**

- The Children's Ministry Team met on Zoom and is keeping kids busy with Zoom activities.
- There is tentative thinking ahead about what Autumn Sunday School would look like.
- JWW - is still scheduled for August. (big concerns were expressed about trying to pull that off.
- Del Hokanson, Director of Children's Ministry has pointed out we still need a Youth Minister which is what Tom Francis is handling so far.

#### **Worship and Spiritual Life (Adam Gibbs):**

- Worship has been phenomenal, despite the circumstances.
- *FCC Art At Home* has been encouraging.
- The Music Arts Ministry Team has been meeting via Zoom.
- June 7, Choral Presentation Sunday will probably be recorded music.

#### **Outreach (Wayne Bland):**

- Wayne stated MG&O is still functioning.
- Grants are given out annually.
- This year they will grant approximately \$35k. The application process is done online. Typically 30 applications are received but right now only 3 have been received so the deadline will be pushed back. If necessary, they will contact previous applicants to see how to equitably distribute the grants this year especially in this year where so many ecumenical organizations are struggling.
- July 30-Aug 2: there is a retreat which is still only half full. Social distancing will be addressed, and there will be some worship aspects.
- Just Peace is not holding meetings/functions at this time but it may be useful for Rich Law to be included in various townhall conversations that Dr. Don will be holding.
- Elizabeth Vincent is the interim for Jacque during her sabbatical so folks in need can call. Anyone that wants to help, can contact Elizabeth for this type of work.
- Connie Kreider, with Just Peace, focuses on Immigration/Sanctuary issues.
- The Environmental Issues focus group has refocused Earth Day activities to an on-line format. Paul wonders if any leftover money from our budget or SBA funds can be sent to MG&O. Wayne suggested, due to past issues and conversations, that we give the congregation a voice in where monies should go.

#### **Vice-Moderator (Paul McNeill):**

- Paul stated that the restoration work is mostly complete. There is still touchup work to be done to the exterior, the high work in the cupola to fix the windows

motors and weather-stripping which will be done after Memorial Day. Paul stated that he believes Sid Shelton is checking the quality of the work. Paul will check with Sid.

### **Treasurer (Polly Strovink)**

- Polly discussed the budget, as mentioned earlier by Bill. Polly would like to revisit the budget more in depth to see what needs to be changed but due to her personal bandwidth, she decided to keep with the budget as it existed in January that was pro-rated for our first 5 months. There were no additional fiduciary updates at this time.

### **Transitional Lead Minister (Rev. Dr. Don Longbottom)**

- Dr. Don gave compliments to Polly and Ruth and to all involved in making the fund raising successful and the SBA loan successful.
- Zoom to LGBTQ- lots of hurt there but a lotta health there.
- Glenda Laveck is no longer working for us.
- As Council, we are leaning toward Ruth Roland doing accounting work part-time until August and then determine how to equitably divvy up the rest of the work. Ruth's job has been multi-faceted so at the point of her leaving that position, it leaves a job position that is quite difficult to fill. It makes more sense to divide it in two: financial administrator and the other piece being the accounting work which can probably be done remotely.

### **Upcoming Special Congregational Meeting**

- a couple of budget adjustments, such as ongoing video services may need to be added. Council discussed how to tactically get the budget ratified in the COVID environment.
- It was suggested we could have most congregants download an absentee ballot and Polly could present a video explaining the budget via Zoom.
- The purpose of the meeting would be to ask the Congregation to approve the other end, the 7 months, of what they approved in January - the 5 months of the budget year.
- We will need 70 absentee ballots to establish a quorum.
- Polly moved that Council presents a full year budget to the congregation by extending the original 5 month budget voted on in January to the remainder of the year. We will plan to hold that special meeting via absentee ballot. Wayne seconded. The motion passed unanimously via hand votes (due to the Zoom format).

The Council wished Jacque a wonderful sabbatical. The grant funds for her sabbatical can be extended for 2021 for the travel portion where she still intends to go to Guatemala.

Margaret gave the closing prayer.

**Meeting evaluation**

- we still miss breaking bread together but the Zoom format is making it doable.
- Margaret recommended for all ministry areas to get their reports posted on email before the meeting to save time.
- Wayne appreciated those verbal ministry reports given tonight being succinct and instructive.
- Polly was thanked effusively for all her financial work, much being outside the normal lines of the Treasurer's normal Council duties.
- Bill stated he heard from all Council members tonight and that he appreciates hearing from everyone and wants to continue to encourage that kind of participation.

Adjourned by consensus: 9:11pm

Respectfully submitted by Lisa A Mason, Council Secretary

---

Lisa A Mason, *Council Secretary*

Bill Kemp, *Council Moderator*