

First Congregational Church United Church of Christ (FCCUCC) of Colorado Springs
Minutes of the Council Meeting
July 9, 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 - on sabbatical
(Minister of Pastoral Care),
position unfilled (Director of Financial
Ministries)

Council Members Absent:

None

Guests: None

Prayer: Dr. Don

Meeting called to order - 6:04 pm

MINUTES

June minutes will be sent out via e-mail for e-mail corrections and then e-mail voting.

MODERATOR/NEW BUSINESS

- Bill stated that he will have a letter go out to the church via e-blast next week regarding the path for re-opening worship.
- Paul McNeill will have a lead-in of basic COVID information.
 - These two pieces will be followed by a Survey Monkey whose results will give the Council a sense of what the Congregation's hopes and concerns are regarding re-opening. (Colorado is currently experiencing a second surge of COVID cases.)
- The Rocky Mountain Conference Celebration will be held July 20-Aug 1. The Celebration this year will be conducted exclusively on-line. Lead and Associate ministers from each church in the conference are invited in addition to lay people. Lisa Mason volunteered. Bill, Elizabeth and Dr. Don will attend as well. [FCC is allowed 4 delegates.]
- Bill brought up the continuing topic of FCC joining the Interfaith Alliance. The cost is \$1,000 per year.
 - Margaret explained that churches can join while adhering to their own individual faith platforms.
 - The Alliance explores and encourages a variety of topics for congregations to consider such as advocacy or education or catalyzing social change.

- FCC would assign 1-2 congregants to network and bring back ideas.
- The church can also pull from the Alliance' pool of speakers for workshops to be held here.
- There was concern from a few Council members whether the Council had the right to vote for this as representative of the whole church. Dr. Don felt Council has the right to make a statement and then allow the Congregation to respond.
- Dr. Don stated he was in favor of this church joining. It was suggested that the membership fee could be paid from general operating funds (not MGO). If there turns out to be a passion for joining then that would be a good cause for congregants to donate/send in money.
- It was also suggested that Just Peace (JP) can pay the fee from their funds.
MOTION: Wayne Bland moved we approve the request from the Just Peace group that Council authorize FCC to join the Interfaith Alliance and Wayne also directed that appropriate staff or volunteers execute the membership application process. The motion passed unanimously via hand vote.
- Margaret offered suggestions who the representatives could be, but Wayne suggested letting JP determine the two representatives.

TRANSITIONAL LEAD MINISTER (DR. DON)

- The Open and Affirming ZOOM meetings have evolved into Micah 6 conversations where a consensus concluded we should end future worship services with the Micah 6 song.
- The PrideFest Parade will be held this Sunday, July 12.
 - Due to COVID it will be conducted as a car parade titled Ride for Pride.
 - Despite the parade organization just recently announcing the parade dates and format, Emily has been able to organize the information to get it out to the congregation at this late date.
 - Dr. Don suggests FCC should make a \$250 donation as well as we need to provide a massive turnout.
 - **MOTION:** Wayne Bland moved we spend \$250 from our advocacy funds to contribute to the Ride for Pride. Margaret seconded. The motion passed unanimously via hand vote.
- Dr. Don stated that online worship numbers are trending lower noting that other UCC congregations are seeing a similar trend. This drop in numbers is often also consistent with summer attendance patterns.
- Del Hokanson's summer children's program, *Some Jesus News*, is looking for toys for the needy, and looking for innovative ways for the children to have fellowship.
- Elizabeth Vincent, filling in for Pastor Jacque during her sabbatical, is putting together affinity groups within the church membership. This can help jumpstart

the idea of organizing the church into small groups for future worship or fellowship formats.

- Staff will start meeting together in person but in outdoor venues such as the Front Portico or the park.
- Rachel Rumble will join the staff in August.
- Anya Powers has been talking with Dr. Don. Anya is currently a chaplain for the Air Force. FCC has been sponsoring her. She needs her 4-way covenant from us which will take place at Broadmoor Church.
 - **MOTION:** Polly moved that we accept Anya into 4-way covenant. Margaret seconded. The motion passed unanimously via hand vote.

OUTREACH (WAYNE BLAND)

- Wayne pointed out to see the email report from Just Peace.
- He pointed out that the Colorado Springs wide Sanctuary Coalition has changed their name.

EDUCATION (LAURA PFENDER)

- Del Hokanson has been working tremendously hard especially looking at what Sunday School would look like under any re-opening scenarios. The summary is that it would be very difficult in its current location.
- Margaret sent information about book club offerings that may be very topical within the current Black Lives Matter environment. The book suggestions came from the Tetrick family (previous FCC members who moved back to the Northwest).
- There was a brief suggestion about looking at long range discussions about a Youth Ministry staff position.

VICE MODERATOR (PAUL MCNEILL)

- Paul reported on the Reopening Task Force that is guiding how to re-open for worship.
 - Paul's part of the eblast, referenced in the New Business section, will explain the recent formation of the task force and their functions.
 - Paul reiterated that the Survey Monkey will be employed to get good data and also to allow congregants to have a say/to give input.
 - This input would address topics such as whether congregants would be willing to have outdoor worship/fellowship venues (outdoor venues reduce risk) since in-church meetings are not reasonable at this time.
 - Outdoor options, or other creative choices, might offset the drop in video attendance.
- Paul reported that the flowers in the new landscaping at the church are doing okay but the newly transplanted tree is not yet flourishing.

- Our next door neighbor (Bernard Sandoval at Sandia) – next to The Dwelling Place has suggested that if the Church were to pay for their snow removal, we could then use their parking lot on Sunday as well as ours.
 - Dr. Don suggested having Ruth or Emily or Rachel check our insurance policy for an umbrella policy that might cover us using someone else’s parking area.

WORSHIP AND SPIRITUAL LIFE (ADAM GIBBS)

- David Acton needs guidance on whether we can have actual singing for the round of Micah 6.
 - Can we move the singing to 4 people or any additional people?
 - Full choir singing is not going to happen for a while, but how about Handbells? Maybe in September?
 - Adam asked to have Paul present these questions to the Reopening TaskForce to determine if air movement would be a problem for the Handbell Choir, approx. 15 people, in the context of on-line worship support.
 - **MOTION:** Adam moved that we allow groups up to 15 for worship support following the guidelines the Reopening Task Force has set. Paul seconded. The motion passed unanimously via hand vote.

CARE AND FELLOWSHIP (MARGARET REIBER)

- Margaret stated to see her email report and especially to note the work listed in there by Elizabeth Vincent.
- Margaret stated that the Visitation Ministry Team expressed a need for a Zoom meeting and there was feedback that the FCC website needs to be improved.
- It was acknowledged that the website is a bit of a long-standing problem. Should a committee be formed to solve it?

TREASURER (POLLY STROVINK)

- Polly stated that Ruth Roland found an error of a 1% pay-cut which needed to be restored for 2020.
- The Financial Advisory Committee met to look at the idea of refinancing the current adjustable rate mortgage (ARM) to a fixed rate mortgage.
 - Their recommendation was to stick with the ARM for at least another two years or so because it will cost \$10K-12,000 to refinance and mortgage rates are expected to stay low for another couple years.
 - Wayne is willing to look at the original mortgage note or financing agreement for loopholes that may help or hinder this. (The mortgage is through the Cornerstone Fund and is currently at \$634k)
 - If the Council accepts the recommendation to not change the mortgage at this time, Polly will write a note for an e-blast to explain why.

- Dr. Don also wants to find a way/a group to workhorse how we can retire the mortgage.
- Brian Dimit and John Spears have stepped down from the Stewardship Committee which will impact the fall annual giving campaign.
 - Dr. Don says we need to put a message out that engages/enlists people to step up to the plate to fill this vacancy.

EVALUATION

- lots of topics were covered and within the timeframe allotted.
- Don appreciated being put on the agenda to get his topics covered.

Closing Prayer - Margaret

Adjourned 8:30 pm (right on time!!)

Respectfully submitted by Lisa A Mason, Council Secretary

Lisa A Mason, *Council Secretary*

Bill Kemp, *Council Moderator*