

Asbury United Methodist Church Council

Minutes of March 24, 2022 Meeting

7:30 PM via Zoom

In Attendance: Pastor Jen Karsner, Dan Haas, Nancy Cody, Nancy Beers, Owens Walker, Elizabeth Tawil, Jackie Britton, Corinne Van Hoven, Alberta Stornetta, and Scott Karsner.

Nancy Beers opened the meeting in prayer.

Minutes

We approved the minutes from the February 24, 2022 meeting.

Pastor Report

Jen informed us that she is working on restoring the reconciling discernment process which has been stalled due to COVID. She needs to replace three of the members of the group – Shirley Palmer, Griff Hall, and Tricia Kelly. The current members are Pastor Jen, Ann Brady, Mike Zaleski, and Roxanne Kuhn. She suggested Raymond Shattuck, Steve or Angela Patterson, and Kristy Weight as possible replacements and asked us to email her if we had any other suggestions.

Trustees

- The Eagle Scout Project to redo the grill area, replace bushes and add benches was approved by the scout group.
- Dan is in the process of fixing the women's toilet in the basement of the sanctuary but needs additional tool to do the repair.
- Dan reported that Jeff Burkhart is looking at scheduling a spring cleanup and that they ordered mulch from the scouts.
- Dan is creating a Signup Genius for the church mowing schedule for May – September – it will be a Sunday slide, a weekly update item, and a Facebook post. The scouts have committed to mowing on the first Saturday of each month.
- Elizabeth asked about our protection from cyberattacks. We use cloud based systems for the church website, the church database (Servant Keeper), online giving (VANCO), accounting (QuickBooks), and bill payment (Bill.com) so we are dependent on the providers of those online services to protect us. Nancy will follow up with Roxanne to see if we can store a backup of our QuickBooks data.

- Through an email vote, on March 15, council approved the following change to Scout COVID guidelines proposed by Shawn Callahan.

Proposed changes:

Effective immediately, Troop 382 will use the following guidelines:

- In-Person Activities: Face masks will be optional for troop activities, indoors or outdoors. Masks may still be worn by anyone who prefers to do so.
- Tenting: Scouts will be permitted to share tents on campouts, as long as there is no more than a two-year age difference (this is a BSA YPT standard). Scouts may still choose to tent individually if they prefer to do so. In order to facilitate tent planning, and to provide each scout with an opportunity to discuss vaccination status with his planned tent mates (to the degree they may want to), each patrol will come up with a tent plan about 10 days before a campout. Parents are encouraged to discuss the scout's tenting plan with him and have him use an individual tent if they are in any way uncomfortable with the plan the patrol comes up with.
- Transportation: Face masks will be optional for drivers and scouts in cars, subject to the driver's discretion. If a driver prefers that all the occupants of a vehicle be masked, all passengers shall do so. Any individual in a vehicle who prefers to wear a mask will also still be free to do so. Campout packing lists will still require each scout and adult to bring a mask on each trip in case these are needed for travel.

SPRC

- Owens asked for approval to offer the admin position to Cindy at a rate of \$20 per hour which is more than the \$18 per hour budgeted. SPRC approved it and Nancy Cody is OK with it. If we don't hire Cindy, we will have to start the search over which will mean additional fees to Indeed and since we weren't able to find an acceptable candidate the last time we advertised the position, it is likely we would also need to raise the rate to hire someone else. Cindy is doing a great job and definitely worth the \$20 an hour. **Council voted to approve the increase in the hourly rate for the admin position to \$20 an hour. That hourly increase would increase the admin salary budget by \$2,500 per year.**
- SPRC met with Kris Neale, church member candidate for ordination. SPRC unanimously voted to recommend her as a candidate for ordination. The next step is a church conference to approve the recommendation. We could either do it at our next Council meeting scheduled for April 28, or if it needs to happen earlier, we decided on two dates April 12 at 6:00 pm or April 14 at 6:00 pm. Pastor Jen will check with the DS to determine which date will work for her.

Finance Report

Nancy reported that the giving shortfall has narrowed and that we received an additional \$20,000 in pledges in February.

Nancy reported that she has had trouble finding a volunteer to do the church audit this year. She contacted several accounting firms to get quotes to see what it would cost us to have it done outside and the cost was around \$5,000. Teresa Lynch our Financial Secretary has offered to do the audit this year. Normally it would be a conflict for the Financial Secretary to do the audit since the Financial Secretary is responsible for recording the offerings. Because of the pandemic, during 2021, the cash and check offerings were not recorded on Sundays by the counters. Nancy Cody and Jean Duncan processed the check and cash offerings once a month at the end of the month so Teresa was not involved with recording the offerings in 2021. Council did not have any objection to Teresa performing the audit.

Nancy asked for approval to make mission donations to SPAN - \$2,500 and My Brother's Pantry \$2,000 from the mission budget. **The donations were approved.**

Youth Ministry

Refuge Retreat

- The Refuge Retreat went well. Youth had fun and were able to deepen their relationships with each other and with God.
- The theme for the retreat (and our whole year) is from *Isaiah 61:3 (TLB)* *To all who mourn in Israel he will give: beauty for ashes; joy instead of mourning; praise instead of heaviness. For God has planted them like strong and graceful oaks for his own glory.*
- Rev. Stephen Scovell did a great job conveying relatable, concise messages to the youth.
- We had two breakout sessions on Saturday. On Saturday morning Mike Campbell and his daughter Carly Campbell led an engaging presentation and discussion on racism. Mike's career in law enforcement and Carly's career in nursing brought perspectives on racism in the policing/judicial system as well as racism in healthcare. The second breakout session we had was on Saturday night which was an art session led by Kris Neale where the youth process the theme verse for the weekend (and our whole year) of Isaiah 61:3 where the youth took broken pottery and recreated into something beautiful just like God takes broken people and creates something beautiful.
- We played games, had time just to hang out, had campfires, ate a lot of food, and just all around had a great time bonding with each other.

Summer 2022

- Impact Week – July 25-29, 2022
- Summer 2022 pick-up basketball update - While not limited to these youth, the intention is to build relationships with youth from the many local neighborhoods that have built up around the church over the years. The existing youth I've talked to about it so far seem very excited about doing something like this. A gently used hoop has been donated to Asbury.

Scott will attend the Orange Conference April 27-29, 2022 for continuing education.

Preschool

Registration is going well. Art show went well and it was nice to have the parents and the kids in the building. The fund raising auction will be held in May. The calendar for the next school year was approved. Natasha has done a great job with the preschool/clubhouse.

Jen brought up an idea that Nancy had suggested after hearing about Scott's plan for mid-week pick-up basketball during the summer. She suggested we might want to consider offering something similar to God's Garage (a lesson and a fun activity) for the older elementary school kids in the clubhouse one day a week after school - like an afterschool club they could choose to join. It could serve as a "Sunday School" and as a pipeline to the God's Garage program. It would also be convenient for the parents (not something extra they would have to drive the children to) since the kids are already at clubhouse. Jen asked us to think about who might be good to lead it.

Anti-Racist Statement

It is unlikely that we can change our deed to remove restrictive covenants. We talked about a possible service of lament during a Sunday church service. We will advertise in advance so that no one is blindsided. Jen also suggested asking the Bishop to preach at Asbury on the anniversary of our adoption of the anti-racist statement. We talked briefly about ways to let people know about our history and discussed possible options including a plaque or a flag.

Alberta's Church History Book

We talked about picking a Sunday after Easter to distribute the church history books. Owens will contact Alberta to work on a recorded interview which will be shown during the Sunday service. Once he has the interview ready, we will select a date to distribute the books. We are truly grateful for all of Alberta's work on the book and look forward to learning about our church history.

Afghanistan Refugee Family – Partnership with Gloria Dei and Other Churches

Jackie reported that LIRS is now focusing on Northern Virginia so it doesn't look like we will be able to be assigned a family from that group. There are some other organizations sponsoring families and Jen voiced her opinion that we would need to work with an experienced organization that could provide needed guidance. Jen is going to reach out to other ministers to see what they are doing and who they are working with. We will wait for more clarity before we contribute the \$2,000 approved at the January Council meeting.

Reconnecting with Members

Jackie Britton raised a concern that it had been hard to stay connected when we weren't seeing each other on Sundays. She had heard concerns that we hadn't been supporting some members during times of need or crisis and that we may not be adequately welcoming new people and incorporating them into the life of the church. We discussed making reminders about the Stephen Ministry Program which had gone dormant during COVID and starting a once a month coffee hour fellowship time after the Sunday service now that more people are returning to in-person worship. We decided to have the coffee on the

first Sunday of the month and Jackie volunteered to line up groups to do the coffee. The Wednesday morning Bible study group will do the first coffee on the first Sunday in April.

COVID Restrictions

Nancy Cody suggested bringing back the pew cushions and opening all pews. Because the meeting ran so late we decided to talk about that at the next meeting.

Next Meeting

April 28th.

We closed us in prayer and the meeting adjourned at 9:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Cody