

Asbury United Methodist Church Council

Minutes of July 29, 2021 Meeting

7:30 PM via Zoom

In Attendance: Council members Elizabeth Tawil, Dan Haas, Anne Haas, Alberta Stornetta, Nancy Cody, Nancy Beers, Karen Beer, Owens Walker, Corinne Van Hoven, Natasha Flannigan, and Jen Karsner, and Scott Karsner.

Open in Prayer

Nancy Beers opened us in prayer.

Minutes

We approved the minutes from the June 17, 2021 meeting.

COVID Guidelines for Preschool

Natasha updated us on the July 23 revisions to the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) and the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) COVID guidelines. Each school can set their own policies and procedures. The recommended safety protocols are aimed to support opening at full capacity. The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) strongly recommends, but does not require, that all individuals who are not fully vaccinated continue to wear face coverings in all indoor settings outside of their home and in outdoor settings when physical distancing cannot be maintained. For child care settings, CDC guidance provides strategies for physical distancing and cohorting in child care programs. A distance of at least 6 feet is recommended between adults who are not fully vaccinated and between children and staff from different cohorts.

Preschool Report

Karen Beer reported that the preschool expects to run a \$25,000 operating deficit for the fiscal year ending 8/31/2021 before recognizing the \$100,000 PPP loan forgiveness as income. In the unlikely event that the PPP loan is not forgiven, the preschool has designated funds (Board Designated, HVAC, and Playground) that can be reallocated to repay the PPP loan.

Karen also reviewed the updates to the ACCPC bylaws recommended by the preschool board. Karen highlighted some of the changes and Nancy Cody asked why the requirement of an audit was not mentioned in the bylaws. Pastor Jen responded that the preschool will be preparing a financial document similar to the church's financial control document and that the audit requirement would be specified in that document. A vote was taken and the Council approved the updates to the ACCPC Bylaws (copy attached).

Karen reported that registration is going well. They are in the process of hiring additional staff to meet needs for the 2021/2022 school year.

Trustee Report

Dan reported Trustees meets next week. It looks like the pro-bono sink hole repair will not materialize and they will now start getting estimates to repair the sink hole. He mentioned that the insurance company is questioning issues with the fellowship hall roof that may require a different underwriter. Nancy Cody reported that she thought the roof was replaced within the last 10 years she will research and provide Dan with the details.

SPRC

Owens reported that we are still looking to hire a church administrator to replace Sherika. They boosted the Indeed and Facebook postings to try and get more applicants. They looked in to the possibility of using a temporary agency until they can hire someone but the cost was prohibitive. The temp agency did provide some recommendations to make the position more attractive including offering free childcare rather than just a discount. Nancy Cody suggested advertising the position to the preschool parents – some may be interested if discounted or free childcare is provided.

Youth Ministry

Scott reported on the leadership retreat and slip and slide kickball. He reports that the attendance has dropped off since COVID. Impact Week is coming up August 16-20.

Scott brought up participation in the Annapolis Pride Parade in October. The youth would like to participate and he was asking whether we wanted to organize a church group to go or to advertise that some people from the church are going in case anyone wanted to carpool and come along.

Pastor Jen brought up the fact that participation in the parade might go against the Book of Discipline and we should think hard about it since we have not yet completed the reconciling ministries discernment process. Scott reported that the youth are getting discouraged with the slow pace of that process. That process stalled with COVID and all church groups and church members have not yet been provided an opportunity to provide feedback on the draft statement. Pastor Jen proposed that we might want to postpone wrapping up that process until January after she gets back from sabbatical.

We decided to address the Pride Parade and the reconciling discernment process at our next meeting. We had other pressing matters to decide at this meeting and postponing will give us more time to think about this.

Finance Report

Nancy Cody provided a recommendation for amending the 2021 budget to include the following changes from the original budget:

- **SPRC Changes**
 - Provide for a 2.5% pay increase for staff effective with the August 13 pay date,
 - Increase the youth Director hours to 20 hours per week,
 - Provide \$3,300 towards the employment of a retired elder to cover for pastor Jen while she is on sabbatical,

The SPRC changes will increase the 2021 SPRC budget by about \$6,000.

- Trustee Change - Increase the office equipment budget to provide \$1,000 for the purchase of a Meeting Owl Pro Smart Video Conference Camera, Microphone, and Speaker to provide a better experience for hybrid meetings, and
- Youth Budget Change - Increase the Youth Budget by \$1,200 to provide for training for Scott that was eliminated from his original budget request.

Giving is ahead of budget by \$24,000 and Nancy projects a \$13,000 operating surplus for the year after recognizing the \$36,000 anticipated PPP forgiveness as income. We have a strong cash position (over 6 months of expenses in unrestricted cash) so Nancy is comfortable going ahead with the budget amendments including the salary increases.

A vote was taken and Council approved the amended budget (see attached). That vote also served as approval of Pastor Jen's sabbatical since prior approval of the sabbatical was contingent on providing budget funds for the retired elder to cover for Jen.

Situation with former clubhouse employee

Vincent Dominick (employed by Asbury clubhouse from August 2016 – June 2018) was charged with a 4th degree sexual offense in June of this year based on an incident that occurred during his employment as a childcare associate with the "Y" in Arnold. Pastor Jen has contacted the police and the Baltimore Washington Conference. Although Asbury requires two adults present at all times with children and we don't know of any incidents that occurred while he was employed by the clubhouse, Pastor Jen plans to send out a letter to all families in the preschool/clubhouse database to let them know about the charge and to provide links to resources that parents can use when talking to their kids. The preschool board and staff will be informed before the letter goes out.

COVID 19 Survey

Pastor Jen shared the results of the COVID 19 survey. After discussion, we agreed to the following changes to our guidelines:

- We will reduce the distancing requirement from 6 feet to 3 feet. We will still use every other pew in the sanctuary but we will allow folks to distance themselves rather requiring them to sit in marked spaces.
- We will continue to require masks for all groups that include participants under the age of 18.
- We will discontinue between services cleaning on Sundays and ask members to use hand sanitizer (from the dispenser in the narthex) prior to entering the sanctuary. The CDC guidance says that, "in most situations, the risk of infection from touching a surface is low. The most reliable way to prevent infection from surfaces is to regularly wash hands or use hand sanitizer." And the guidance says, "When no people with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 are known to have been in a space, cleaning once a day is usually enough to sufficiently remove virus that may be on surfaces and help maintain a healthy facility."

- We will discontinue signups for Sunday worship.
- We will allow food to be served if it is pre-plated by persons who are masked and gloved. Social distancing guidelines must be observed while masks are removed for eating/drinking.

Charge Conference

Charge Conference is scheduled for September 12 after church. All required reports and forms are due to the district 10 days prior to the conference. (Pastor Jen says the 10 day requirement refers to 10 business days.) Nancy Cody commented that the forms are available online and after this meeting forwarded the email from the conference with links to the forms to the council members that would be responsible for completing the forms. We will review this at our August meeting.

Next Meeting

We will meet August 17 at 7:30.

Dan Haas closed us in prayer and the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Cody