PLYMOUTH CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
Church Council Minutes, January 29, 2019, Greenwood Room  
Mark Rosenbury, Moderator; Pam Kenyon, Moderator-Elect

Voting Members Present: John Childers, Franklin Codel, Fred Dorr, Pam Duffy, Kerry Gumm, Irene Hardisty, Kirk Johnson, Beth Stelle Jones, Linda Knodle, Nancy Landess, Deb Ledesma, Cheryl Morton, Mary Riche, Annette Weeber

Voting Members Absent: Judy Diedrichs, Jodi Gruening, Pam Kenyon, Jon Merkle, Rick Miller, Chris Woods

Others Present: Mary Ann Beard, Reverend Lindsey Braun, Cindy Eaton-Eklund, Christopher Goodson, Reverend Nikira Hernandez-Evans, Jennifer Hines, Karen Jeske, Reverend Doctor Matthew Mardis-LeCroy, Reverend Doctor Valerie Miller-Coleman, Kathleen Murrin, Reverend Laura Robinson, Mark Rosenbury, Reverend LeAnn Stubbs, Susan Waller

Introductions & Welcome: Mark Rosenbury called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Devotions: Rev. Matt Mardis-LeCroy asked all board members to center thoughts and prayers.

Minutes: November 27, 2018—Motion to approve, Kirk Johnson; second, Cheryl Morton. Minutes approved as submitted.

SPECIAL REPORTS AND OLD BUSINESS
Subject: United to Serve Task Force, Mark Rosenbury and Beth Stelle Jones
  • Developing a five-part communication plan.
Subject: 2019 Budget Presentation, Cheryl Morton, Rev. Mardis-LeCroy, Jennifer Hines
  • Rev. Mardis-LeCroy
    o We have challenges and opportunities facing us, including support of the Transition into Ministry (TiM) program and repair of the Tower.
    o We are financially strong, but our Operating Budget remains a challenge. Income has been flat over past five to six years with expenses continuing to grow.
    o With the budget out of balance, we will need to use some of our reserve funds for 2019. Our goal is to not have this be a necessity in the future.
    o Authorization of a long-range planning task force to think strategically about the financial future with the goal of setting the church on a sustainable footing for years to come. They will solicit input and recommend expenses by mid-year.
  • Jennifer Hines: Budget details provided to Church Council members.
    o General Fund Balances
    o 2019 Pledge Analysis
    o 2019 Income & Expenses Budget—Approved by Board of Trustees at January 23, 2019, board meeting.
  • Cheryl Morton moved the following as a joint motion:
    o Moved that the Plymouth Church Council authorizes the Long-Range Planning Task Force (Pam Kenyon, Mark Rosenbury, Donna Paulsen, Dave Everett, Beth Stelle Jones, Richard Lozier and Pam Duffy) to seek input and explore strategies to match revenue and expense in the Plymouth Church operating budget beyond 2019, in keeping with the strategic priorities of the congregation. The Long-Range Planning Task Force should provide regular updates on its work and submit an initial set of recommendations to the Church Council in April 2019, anticipating Church Council action in May 2019.
    o Moved that the Budget for 2019 as submitted to the Church Council be approved.
Discussion called on the joint motion:

- Beth Stelle Jones suggested considering bonuses for staff at year end.
- Franklin Codel commented on budget management throughout the year.
- Rev. Mardis-LeCroy will communicate budget details through Contact. Jennifer Hines will provide budget details in Contact.

Joint motion approved.

Subject: Rachael Corpus Resignation Letter, Rev. Mardis-LeCroy
- Board members reviewed the letter.
- Motion to approve Rachael Corpus’ resignation letter, Linda Knodle; second, Beth Stelle Jones. Motion approved.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Arts, Memorials & Architectural Changes: No report.

Personnel: No report.

Plymouth Foundation: Reported by Mary Ann Beard
- Board is paying close attention to the stock market volatility.
- Financial advisor attended the board’s Wednesday, January 23, meeting.
- Investment Committee is helping review investments.

Plymouth Women: Reported by Annette Weeber
- Plymouth Church member Jenny Quiner, Dogpatch Urban Gardens, is the presenter at the February 21 Lunch & Learn.

Stephen Ministry: No report.

Transition into Ministry (TiM): Reported by Kathleen Murrin
- Two TiM candidates will be here separately the weekends of February 2 and 3 and February 9 and 10.

BOARD REPORTS

Benevolences: Report submitted by Irene Hardisty is attached. Additional comments:
- Overall numbers for special offerings were slightly down for 2018.

Christian Education: Reported by Deb Ledesma
- Refer to Special Reports: Rachael Corpus Resignation Letter.
- Continuing the Family Life event of roller skating this month.

Christian Social Action: Reported by Kerry Gumm
- Will discuss the status of the Black Lives Matter banner at the February Church Council meeting.

Christian Stewardship: Report submitted by Beth Stelle Jones is attached.

Deacons: Report submitted by Fred Dorr is attached. Additional comments:
- The following will serve as officers during the next program year:
  - Jodi Gruening, Senior Deacon
  - Sid Ramsey, Junior Deacon
  - Linda Sullivan, Secretary

Membership: Report submitted by Nancy Landess is attached.
  • Moved that Linda Vanderpool be approved to complete Jen Jensen’s term. Motion approved.

Spiritual Growth: Reported by John Childers
  • Fifty people are participating in Reading the Bible in 90 Days.
  • Summer vesper program is scheduled for July 2019.

Trustees: Report submitted by Cheryl Morton is attached.

NEW BUSINESS: None.

Member at Large: Reported by Mary Riche.
  • Will forward any comments she receives from congregants to the appropriate boards.
  • Noted that outside lighting by the Circle Drive steps leading to the public sidewalk is not good.

STAFF REPORTS
Lindsey Braun
  • Marissa Hernandez-Evans is the new Education Coordinator.

Cindy Eaton-Eklund
  • Communications on all different levels continues.

Christopher Goodson
  • Sunday, February 17, 4 p.m., Waveland Hall, is the rescheduled concert by Dr. Damani Phillips, University of Iowa, Jazz in the Fight for Civil Rights.

Nikira Hernandez-Evans
  • Climate Revival conference scheduled for Saturday, February 9, is sold out.
  • Young adults are “going strong.”

Jennifer Hines
  • Part 2 application for Tower funding has been completed.
  • Construction has kept our east parking lot a mess. The construction company is hauling away our snow.

Karen Jeske
  • The foCUS survey was sent on Monday, January 28.

Valerie Miller-Coleman
  • Sees a lot of Plymouth Church folks becoming more engaged in community.

Laura Robinson
  • Sees lots of “God stuff” happening.

LeAnn Stubbs
  • Sees lots of “caring” happening.

Susan Waller
  • Pizzas available Sunday, February 3.
  • Matins Variety Show will be based on the musical, Mama Mia.
  • Matins tour will go to Ohio.
Matt Mardis-LeCroy

- Thanks to all for dedication to our church and the willingness to do hard work.

Closing prayer: Rev. Mardis-LeCroy

Next meeting: February 26, 2019, 7:00 p.m., Greenwood Room.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Knodle, Secretary
January Council Reports

Board of Benevolences, Irene Hardisty
- Thanksgiving Special Offering collection amount was $9,865.36.
- Christmas Special Offering collection amount was $25,024.19.
- Request for Application to Receive the Easter Special Offering gift has been posted to the Plymouth Church website. Applications are due March 15.

Board of Christian Stewardship, Beth Stelle Jones
- As the Preserving the Past, Building the Future campaign winds to a close, the board would like to thank the Church Council and ALL members of Plymouth Church for their financial promises to advance the ministries of the church. Highlights:
  - Three fellowship/education table events had good attendance.
  - Multiple testimonials from dedicated members at Saturday and Sunday services.
  - Combined efforts of Stewardship and Trustee boards to make reminder calls on two occasions.
  - Coordinated support from the church staff—a total team commitment!
- Financial:
  - 55 new pledges $123,339
  - 172 increased giving $685,183
  - 293 no change $731,304
  - 634 total pledges $1,735,057 (4.6% over 2018)
- Concerns: 64 pledged in 2018, but have not yet pledged for this year. Balance needed to make the draft budget = $257,809.
- Tower Restoration:
  - Pledged $399,939.25
  - Balance to raise $200,560.75
- Concerns: Contract is signed and repairs will be made.
  - Reminder: Tower Campaign followed the spring TiM campaign.
- Other business:
  - Financial Peace class showed some interest. It is rescheduled.
  - Served the Homeless Shelter dinner Saturday, January 26, in cooperation with the Plymouth Foundation members.
  - Special thanks to the Board of Stewardship for the cheerful giving of their time and talents.

Board of Deacons, Fred Dorr
- Thanksgiving: The Thanksgiving service went smoothly. It was a challenge to secure the drummer and pilgrim families. The approach to recruiting for those positions may need some attention early on next year. The Deacon Thanksgiving Committee will meet with Rev. Matt Mardis-LeCroy and Christopher Goodson to review those concerns sometime in the first quarter of 2019. Governor Kim Reynolds graciously asked Kay Lozier to stand in for her at the service.
- Christmas Eve: Christmas Eve services also operated smoothly. A summary of those matters needing Deacon attention prior to, and during, each of the four Christmas Eve services will be posted in Dropbox for future Deacon reference.
- Meeting with Confirmation Class: Sandee Lyons and Fred Dorr met with the confirmation class last month to talk with them about Deacon duties.
- Deacon Pancake Supper: The pancake supper is set for March 5, 2019. The committee will need lots of help that night. Tickets will be distributed at the February 12, 2019, Deacon meeting. All Deacons are expected to participate in ticket sales.
- Cookie Duty: Deacons will have cookie duty August 4, 2019, August 11, 2019, and August 18, 2019. Sign up takes place in June after the new Deacons have come on board.
- Deacon Recruitment: Current Deacons need to be actively thinking about the recruitment of next year’s Deacons. Jodi Gruening discussed the subcommittee report written by Pam Kenyon, entitled Uniting to Serve. Jodi also announced that next year Sid Ramsey will be serving as Junior Deacon and Linda Sullivan will be serving as Secretary of the Deacon Board.
- Offering Collections and Bank Deposits: Fred Dorr discussed recent problems and urged all Deacons to take the time necessary to double check everything to make sure all gifts get properly
deposited. Deacons were reminded that all offering plates should end up on the back table on the east side of the sanctuary.

- **Communion:** Next communion is scheduled for March 10, 2019, which is the first Sunday in Lent. It was suggested that staff consider having the congregation not sing during communion as several members struggled with their hymnals while passing the plates.

- **Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner:** Tickets will be available starting February 10, 2019. Each Deacon will receive twenty (20) tickets. Deacons will sell tickets in Waveland between services and after the 11:00 service on February 17, 2019, February 24, 2019, and March 3, 2019. The *Contact* and pulpit announcements will be used to help publicize the event. Proceeds will go to the Pastors Discretionary Fund.

- **Social Committee:** The next Deacon social is scheduled for February 8, 2019, from 6:00–8:00 p.m. at Smash Park in West Des Moines.

- **Churches United Shelter Dinner:** The next dinner is scheduled for Wednesday, March 27, 2019. The per-Deacon cost is $20. A sign-up sheet was passed around. Cathy McMullen will review responsibilities at the February meeting.

- **Easter:** Easter is April 21, 2019. Deacon responsibilities will be discussed during the February and March Deacon board meetings.

- **Vespers:** Cathy McMullen will talk to Rev. Valerie Miller-Coleman and have a sign-up sheet at the February Deacon board meeting for the next set of Vespers services.

- **Name Tags for Deceased Members:** The issue of retention or removal of deceased Plymouth Church members on the name tag boards was again an issue of discussion. Rev. Mardis-LeCroy is reviewing the issue with the rest of the ministerial staff and will advise how it matter should be handled for future purposes.

**Board of Membership,** Nancy Landess

- Requesting approval for Amy Cox to fill the unexpired term of Barbara Smith.
- New member class was held January 27. Twelve persons attended with 10 joining the church the weekend of February 9 and 10.
- New members' potluck will be held February 10.
- Sixty letters were sent to members that have been inactive for five years or more to see if they want to stay on the church roll.

**Board of Music and Fine Arts,** Kirk Johnson

- Board members, working with volunteers, were instrumental in the setup and tear down of hallway holiday decorations up from Thanksgiving until January 7.
- We had a semester vacancy on the board with the resignation of Jen Jensen. The board approved and vetted nominee Linda Vanderpool to fill the last few months of the vacancy and then fill an upcoming three-year term.

**Board of Trustees,** Cheryl Morton

- 2018 Financial results were reviewed and approved. Results are consistent with recent forecasts. For the full year, reserves of $56,000 were used versus a budget of $43,000. The primary cause of the variance in December relates to a small number of pledges that were scheduled to be received as stock transfers in 2018 but will be delivered in early 2019. The delay was driven by poor market conditions in December.
- Trustees reviewed and approved the 2019 budget and a related motion which will be reviewed in Church Council in more detail.
- During the December meeting, Trustees also took initial steps toward drafting policies related to fundraising activities that occur at Plymouth Church. A task force was convened which will work on further developing the draft policy over the coming months.