PLYMOUTH CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
Church Council Minutes, February 26, 2019, Greenwood Room  
Mark Rosenbury, Moderator; Pam Kenyon, Moderator-Elect


Voting Members Absent: Judy Diedrichs, Pam Duffy, Kerry Gumm, Pam Kenyon, Rick Miller

Others Present: Mary Ann Beard, Reverend Lindsey Braun, Bev Burns, Karen Jeske, Reverend Doctor Matthew Mardis-LeCroy, Kathleen Murrin, David Nelson, Mark Rosenbury, Reverend LeAnn Stubbs

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

Devotions: Rev. Matt Mardis-LeCroy gave thanks for the witness we have been given of a God who loves all people. He asked that we be in prayer for our United Methodist friends.

Minutes: January 29, 2019—Motion to approve, Beth Stelle Jones; second, Nancy Landess. Minutes approved as submitted.

SPECIAL REPORTS AND OLD BUSINESS
Subject: Nominations, Rev. Mardis-LeCroy
  • Provided a packet for the boards' nomination process.
  • Please don’t approach anyone prior to the March 26 Church Council meeting.
  • Nomination forms will be made available this coming weekend.
  • All names need to be to Paula Wilkers for vetting by March 8.

Subject: Long-Range Planning Task Force, Mark Rosenbury
  • Have met twice with 100% attendance. Will meet again Thursday, February 28.
  • Reviewed income and expense trends since 2015. Will compare staffing with similar United Churches of Christ (UCC) and local churches. Also, looked at membership and giving by members’ ages and tenure.
  • Working on a proposal for a strategic planning facilitator.

Subject: Plymouth Place Board of Directors, David Nelson
  • David Nelson presented a proposal that Plymouth Church be empowered to appoint the members of the Board of Directors for Plymouth Place. They are as follows:
    o Rev. Matthew J. Mardis-LeCroy, Senior Minister (Automatically a board member.)
    o Mickey Carlson
    o Bill Hedlund
    o Will Hoekman
    o Greg Kenyon
    o David Nelson
    o Emily Osweiler
    o Linda Railsback
    o Lynn Vorbrich
  • Plymouth Place history:
    o Plymouth Church sponsored the building of Plymouth Place in 1966.
    o Newbury Management is currently managing the building.
    o Ownership of the building is converting to a non-profit foundation.
    o Building was updated within the last five years and is almost fully occupied.
• Motion to appoint eight board members from Plymouth Church to serve on the Board of Directors for Plymouth Place made by Mary Riche. Second, Chris Woods. Motion approved.

Subject: Financing for Tower Project, Cheryl Morton
• Plymouth Church Tower Project Costs sheet distributed to Council members.
• Currently, we will not have all of the money needed for the project at the time construction payments are required.
• Distributed West Bank loan details to Church Council members. Proposing a $750,000 commercial line of credit from West Bank. Draws on the line are not expected to be significant.
• Motion by Cheryl Morton to approve the commercial line of credit so that Jennifer Hines can move forward with the loan process. Motion approved.

COMMITTEE REPORTS
Arts, Memorials & Architectural Changes: No report.

Personnel: Reported by Mark Rosenbury
• Began long-range work with Personnel members on evaluating staff structure.

Plymouth Foundation: Reported by Mary Ann Beard
• Competitive grant requests are due April 1. Will fund programs in keeping with the church’s mission.
• Approximately $75,000 is in the competitive grant-funding pool.

Plymouth Women: Reported by Annette Weeber
• Plymouth Church member Jenny Quiner, Dogpatch Urban Gardens, was the presenter at the February 21 Lunch & Learn.
• Because of school spring breaks, there will not be a luncheon in March.

Stephen Ministry: Reported by Bev Burns
• Currently, there are 18 Stephen Ministers serving 13 care receivers.
• We have 16 women and two men and are hoping to attract additional men for the new class which will be next January.
• Longest Night Service was the best attended yet. Thanks to Rev. Mary Beth Mardis-LeCroy and Susan Waller for the music, and to the youth who assisted.

Transition into Ministry (TiM): Reported by Kathleen Murrin
• Kathleen Murrin moved that we call Mary Kate Buchanan, Princeton Theological Seminary, to a TiM position as Associate Minister. Second, Deb Ledesma. Motion approved.

BOARD REPORTS
Benevolences: Reported by Chris Woods.
• Applications due March 15 for inclusion in the Easter offering.

Christian Education: Report submitted by Deb Ledesma is attached.

Christian Social Action: Reported by Jon Reinders
• Ministry Action Plan (MAP): Focusing on interaction with committees and how our MAP is working.
• Working on improving communication among committees/task forces.
• Currently have 10 committees/task forces.

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

Membership: Report submitted by Nancy Landess is attached.


Spiritual Growth: Reported by John Childers
  • Summer Evening Prayer Services scheduled for July 11, 18 and 25 at 5:30 p.m. in the sanctuary.
  • Library has received a large book donation for the anti-racism section.
  • Bible in 90 Days is moving along with 25-30 persons attending each week’s meeting.

Trustees: Report submitted by Cheryl Morton is attached.

NEW BUSINESS: None.

Member at Large: Mary Riche: No report.

STAFF REPORTS
Lindsey Braun
  • Expressed gratitude for Deb Ledesma’s leadership on the Board of Christian Education and for the extra effort from the teachers.
  • Want to make certain the children remain our priority during this time of transition.

Karen Jeske
  • Focus has been on the Transition into Ministry program and candidates.
  • All-church survey yielded about 250 responses. They are being analyzed.

LeAnn Stubbs
  • Focusing on the ministry for the second half of life, including conversations.
  • Created a Lenten guide, 40 Days of Lent for Folks Over 50.

Matt Mardis-LeCroy
  • Please review the Storytellers article in the Monday, February 25, Des Moines Register featuring Rev. Lindsey Braun.
  • Plymouth Church, Lawrence, KS, will be issuing a call to Rev. Valerie Miller-Coleman. She is preaching there Sunday, March 24, followed by the congregations’ vote.
  • In view of this coming change, we will review Plymouth’s overall staffing.

Closing prayer: Rev. LeAnn Stubbs

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

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Knodle, Secretary
Board of Christian Education, Deb Ledesma

- Strategized on covering Director of Child and Family Ministry critical duties—Sunday School, classes for families and Vacation Bible School (VBS).
  - Class curriculum authoring is being covered by a few talented teachers.
  - BCE is covering all hallway-helper duties along with Marissa Hernandez-Evans.
  - Classes for families have been completed or moved to the fall.
  - VBS plans are still underway, but not yet on solid ground.
- Decision was made by Senior Minister and Long-Range Planning Task Force to initiate hiring process after their recommendation has been put forth in April.
- Roller skating party was held on Sunday, February 17, with minimal participation.
- Board returning to monthly meetings instead of every other month.

Board of Christian Stewardship, Beth Stelle Jones

- Board continued to review the Stewardship Drive and brainstormed ideas for next year. We will continue to look into possible changes and research churches in the area and printed materials.
  - START Campaign with Pie Weekend, soft beginning during Advent, testimonials.
  - Mail materials after Christmas; two sermons.
  - Conclude January mid-month.
  - Set up realistic budget independent of campaign.
- Shelter Meal (in conjunction with Foundation Board) went very well. Cost per member was $36, payable to the church. Thanks to all who were able to participate.
- Financial Peace program will be taught by member Jennifer Gelner (Thanks!).
- Recruitment for the board discussed. Potential members will be prayerfully considered and compiled at the next meeting.

Board of Deacons, Fred Dorr

- Name Tags for Deceased Members: Rev. Matt Mardis-LeCroy and the staff discussed and agreed that name tags need to be brought to the staff, who will handle on a case by case basis.
- Deacons: Current Deacons need to be actively thinking about the recruitment of next year’s Deacons. Jodi Gruening passed around a sheet for listing possible candidates. Deacons need to finalize their list at the March 12, 2019, meeting for submission to the Church Council at its March 26, 2019 meeting.
- Deacons Serving at Non-Sanctuary Events: Rev. Mardis-LeCroy talked with Chris Goodson, and in the future, they will use members from the Board of Music and Fine Arts for non-sanctuary events.
- Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner: Tickets will be available starting February 10, 2019. Sign-up sheets for the dates Deacons will sell tickets and for Deacons to work the Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner were passed around. Contact and pulpit announcements will be used to help publicize the event. Proceeds go to the Pastors Discretionary Fund.
- Social Committee: Deacons held a social event at Smash Park on February 8, 2019. It was well received.
- Churches United Shelter Dinner: The next United Shelter dinner is scheduled for Wednesday, March 27, 2019. The per-Deacon cost is $20. A sign-up sheet was passed around during the meeting.
- Church Council Report: The Church Council report for the January 2019 meeting was previously submitted by Fred Dorr to the board.
- Staff Report: Rev. Mardis-LeCroy talked about his participation at a January meeting called Conversations. That meeting involved ministers from the larger UCC churches. He talked about how impactful it is to see three former TiM ministers participating at these meetings. The finalist for the next TiM will be presented to Church Council later this month.

Board of Membership, Nancy Landess

- New member class joined on February 9 and 10 with 10 new members.
- New member potluck was enjoyed on February 10.
- Board of Membership will serve dinner at the Homeless Shelter on Wednesday, February 27.
- Church Membership Roll Report: In January 2019, 209 letters were sent to out-of-state members who have not pledged to or attended Plymouth Church in more than five years to see if they want to remain on the church roll. As of February 12, 65 were returned by the US Postal Service with no forwarding address, nine requested to be retained on the role, two asked to be deactivated and 132 had not yet responded. On February 12, the Board of Membership voted to deactivate 67 names from the church roll. This includes the two requesting to be deactivated and the 65 for
whom we have no contact information. Though now listed as non-members, these names will remain in the database and should anyone indicate they want to be active again, the Board of Membership will re-activate them.

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

- New Piano/Piano Renovation Project: With tremendous thanks to the Plymouth Foundation, the church has recently completed purchase of a 2005 Yamaha C3X piano (6’1” in length). This beautiful medium grand piano is in superb condition and will serve Plymouth Church for many years to come. The cost was $21,200 for this 14-year-old piano. Yamaha C3s are excellent pianos that retail in the $55,000.00 range when brand new.

  The new Yamaha piano is currently in the Recital Hall, where it will live during Phase II of our piano renovation project (rebuilding the Steinway B, 7’ grand piano). After the rebuild, the 2005 Yamaha C3X will move to the Rehearsal Hall, the 1887 Steinway will move to the Recital Hall, and the rebuilt 1984 Steinway B will move to the Sanctuary.

- The Damani Phillips Lecture/Recital was cancelled a second time due to snow. We are working to select a new date, after the snow season, to host this important presentation.

- New Paraments: A set of new paraments in five liturgical colors for the sanctuary are near completion by the Chancel Arts Committee. The first set in white have been on the pulpit and lectern in the sanctuary since Christmas Eve. We will see the purple set at the beginning of Lent, red at Pentecost, green this summer and blue at Advent.

- Gallery Installation: If you haven’t stopped by to see *The Cry of Job* exhibit in our art gallery, be sure to make plans to see it. Several events are planned in relation to this high-profile exhibition, available through March 30.

- Upcoming Concerts/Events at Plymouth Church:
  - Friday, March 8, 7:00 p.m., St. Ambrose University Chamber Singers, Davenport, IA, in Concert
  - Sunday, March 10, St. Ambrose University Chamber Singers in morning worship
  - Sunday, March 10, 7:00 p.m., Matins Variety Show
  - Friday and Saturday, April 5 and 6, Heartland Youth Choir “Meet the Composer” event
  - Sunday, April 7, TBD, Organist Carl Gravander, Jr., organ recital
  - Friday and Saturday, April 12 and 13, Matins Annual Garage Sale held in the gymnasium and Waveland Hall

**Board of Trustees, Cheryl Morton**

- January income was $360,000 with expenses $134,000 for a net surplus of $225,000 which was added to the operating reserves.

- There were no budget variances to report for January as the budget was aligned to actuals for the month since the budget was approved in Church Council late in January.

- A motion will be brought to Church Council for a credit line to assist with the Tower Funding and the timing differences.

- A group of Trustees will be convening to prepare a Fundraising Policy in the coming months.