
Voting Members Absent: Wendy Bellus, Eliza Ovrom, Christine Woods

Others Present: Mary Ann Beard, Reverend Lindsey Braun, Reverend Mary Kate Buchanan, Bev Burns, Cindy Eaton-Eklund, Christopher Goodson, Karen Jeske, Shana Johnson, Reverend Doctor Matthew Mardis-LeCroy, Sally Pederson, Mary Riche, Shelly Soorholtz, Noelle Trevillyan, Susan Waller

Dinner at 6:00 p.m.: Taco bar was provided for all Church Council members and guests.

Board Orientation: Rev. Matt Mardis-LeCroy led the group through procedures, responsibilities and expectations assumed by Church Council members. He provided a handout to help guide members.

Introductions & Welcome: Sally Pederson called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m.

Devotions: Pam Duffy

Minutes: June 25, 2019—Motion to approve, Rocky Morton; second, Pam Duffy. Minutes approved as corrected.

SPECIAL REPORTS AND OLD BUSINESS
Subject: Director of Finance and Operations Task Force Update, Rev. Mardis-LeCroy
• Task force’s work is continuing.
• Discussion followed.

Subject: Director of Child and Family Services Task Force Update, Rev. Mardis-LeCroy
• Task force’s work is continuing.
• Discussion followed.

Subject: Strategic Plan 2020: A Shared Vision for Our Future, Sally Pederson and Rev. Mardis-LeCroy
• Presented the grant application to use Appreciative Inquiry with the Reverend Sarai Rice. Rev. Rice will work with the Steering Committee in order to create a strategic plan.
• Motion to approve the grant application by Irene Hardisty. Second, Judy Diedrichs. Motion approved.

Subject: By-Laws Subcommittee: Proposed Scope of Work, Rocky Morton
• Subcommittee looking at information from churches close to the size of Plymouth Church, and studying church governance and structure for those churches.
• Receiving input from constituencies.
• Studying our church by-laws in order to update them and have them ready for the next annual meeting.
• Council accepted the report of the subcommittee.

BOARD REPORTS
Benevolences: Report submitted by Irene Hardisty is attached.

Christian Education: Report submitted by Jon Merkle is attached.

Christian Social Action: No report.

Christian Stewardship: Report submitted by Pam Duffy is attached.
Deacons: Report submitted by Jodi Gruening is attached.

Membership: Report submitted by Terri Sterk is attached.

Music and Fine Arts: No report.

Spiritual Growth: Report submitted by Linda Knodle is attached.

Trustees: Report submitted by Franklin Codel is attached.

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

Personnel: No report.

Plymouth Foundation: No report.

Plymouth Women: Annette Weeber
- First Lunch & Learn of the program year is September 19 in Waveland Hall. Speakers are the Plymouth Church Associate TiM Ministers, Reverends Mary Kate Buchanan and Nikira Hernandez-Evans.
- Funeral reception help is greatly needed. Please contact Annette Weeber if you are able to volunteer.

Stephen Ministry: Bev Burns
- Will be recruiting a new class this fall. Fifty hours of training is required in order to be commissioned.
- Requested members of the council to ask and encourage people who you think would be good Stephen Ministers to contact us.

Transition into Ministry (TiM): Karen Jeske
- Reverend Mary Kate Buchanan is now on staff.

NEW BUSINESS: None.

Member at Large: Rocky Morton. No report.

STAFF REPORTS
Rev. Lindsey Braun
- Has seen God in the faces of many others.
- Thanks the many who have helped during all of the changes.

Rev. Mary Kate Buchanan

Cindy Eaton-Eklund
- Continuing interviews for a new assistant.
- Ingersoll Live had great participation.

Christopher Goodson
- Have completed cleaning in the office suite.
- Arts at Plymouth programming list shows 20-plus events. Handel’s Messiah is Dec. 7.
- All rehearsals start this week with new schedules. We are offering four new ensembles.
• September 4 is registration and orientation in Waveland Hall.
• Chancel Choir currently has 2,200 copies of music for their use.
• Des Moines Vocal Arts Ensemble is now calling Plymouth Church their rehearsal home.

Karen Jeske
• Has copies of the foCUS report to share.
• Beefing up of Wednesday night activities also includes return of the Wednesday night dinners.

Susan Waller
• Sees the face of God in the 22 new young people coming into the Matins program.
• Has moved to a new office.
• Spoke about the loss of Marla Allen and what she meant to the Matins over the years.

Matt Mardis-LeCroy
• Listening to conversations and staff reports reminds me of how many people are stretching to get things done right now.

Action Items: Sally Pederson
• Suggestions for Steering Committee members to her by September 5.
• MAPs by September 22.

CLOSING PRAYER: Rev. Matt Mardis-LeCroy
NEXT MEETING: September 24, 2019, 7:00 p.m., Greenwood Room

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Knodle, Secretary
August Plymouth Church Council Boards Reports

Board of Benevolences, Irene Hardisty

- Shelter Meals: These six meal dates remain open—Nov. 26 or 27, Dec. 26 or 27, May 26 and July 27. Please share these service opportunities with people who may have interest in preparing the meal or donating food for a meal. Also, not all Church Council boards and committees have signed up for shelter meals. If unsure whether your group has, please contact susanapohl@gmail.com or ihardisty@yahoo.com. Thanks.
- Thanksgiving Offering: Recipients of the Thanksgiving gifts will be 10% to the Pastor’s Discretionary Fund and 45% each to Family Promise of Greater Des Moines and Plymouth Food Buddies’ partnership with Hubbell School.
- Date Specific Work:
  - August 24, 4:30 p.m., Food Buddies kicking-off packing weekend meals—second and fourth Saturdays.
  - August 25, 11:00 service, blessing of quilts made by the Plymouth quilters for beds at CISS.
  - August 26, BoB will provide CISS meal.
  - September 1-8, Family Promise hosts families at Plymouth Church.
- Food Insecurity: The Food Pantry (Annabelle Marsh) and Food Buddies (Robin Maharry) are exploring ways their committees can collaborate and improve efficiencies for their committees and for Plymouth Church congregants. Meetings were held with DMARC and Iowa Food Bank. DMARC’s primary needs are cash and hygiene products such as diapers, disposable adult underwear and sanitary products. Food Buddies is exploring options for purchasing food at reduced cost other than from retail outlets.
- Homelessness: Furniture Pickup and delivery for re-housing homeless and refugees continues pickups every second Saturday. In addition to shelter meals and quilts, collection and delivery of hygiene products to CISS continues. Family Promise is working with a scout who is building extra storage in each bedroom for his Eagle Scout project. Family Promise held a planning and check-in meeting with Family Promise of Greater Des Moines.
- Career Closet: The committee has re-organized, defined roles/job descriptions and is in the process of creating a manual/guide. Additionally, the Career Closet is giving donated towels, blankets and such to Family Promise.
- Special Offering: Committee is initiating work for Christmas Special Offering so that the gift application form may be posted on the website at least two months prior to the collection.
- UCC Relationship: This committee has begun an exploratory process to determine whether a formal committee would be beneficial. The role of the committee would be to ensure Plymouth Church’s participation in conferences, etc., and bring back news, initiatives and opportunities. If interested contact Chuck Briem, shrchkbriem@gmail.com, or Gene Bryant, iamolc@outlook.com.

Board of Christian Education, Jon Merkle

- The board has been busy preparing for the start of Church School with teacher recruitment and ensuring classrooms have the necessary supplies. Rev. Lindsey Braun has been instrumental in gathering teachers and Lindsey Pruett-Hornbaker has written the curriculum.
- Classes for Families will be offered in September for families with children entering kindergarten. Blessing will be held at 9:00 a.m. worship on September 22.
- The board is exploring the possibility of holding church school between Sunday morning services. We are forming a fact-finding committee to see if there is sufficient buy in from families with young children and to work with worship leaders to see what changes could be made to provide for a more child inclusive Sunday services.

Board of Christian Stewardship, Pam Duffy

- 2019-2020 Stewardship Campaign: Solicited input from various current and former church leaders. Discussed various themes. Focus will be on pledges to operating budget only. Launch, logistics and schedule:
  - Timeframe: Launch Pie Weekend in November and end before Christmas.
  - BCOS to personally invite members/families to Pie Weekend.
  - BOCS to visit Plymouth Church boards in October to garner support and pledges.
  - Packet pick up on Pie Weekend. Pledge cards can be completed there.
  - Follow-up calls on pledges in January 2020.
  - Sermons and testimonials at selected Advent services.
- Financial Peace University: Adult sessions to continue January 2020 with instructor Jennifer Gelner.
- February-March 2020: Evaluate outcomes of Stewardship Campaign.
Board of Deacons, Jodi Gruening

- Rex Anderson talked about the Plymouth Church web site and asked for our feedback to incorporate into all the good insights he’s gleaned from other boards and committees. He indicated implementation for some changes is scheduled for the 2020 fourth quarter.
- Five Minutes with Matt: This is a new item on the agenda! Tonight, Rev. Matt Mardis-LeCroy thanked the deacons for taking care of the details that allow everyone to enjoy their experience at church. But he wants us to remember we are really an extension of the pastoral staff, worship leaders, ministering to others. He explained the church year. The Program Year starts June 1 and marks the beginning of the church year, for example, new board membership. The Liturgical Year determines the themes for the different seasons. The summer themes are Creation and Purpose. These will go through Labor Day and the color is red. After Labor Day, the theme is Friendship and the color is green.
- Standing committee reports:
  - Church Council report: Rev. Mardis-LeCroy talked about the progress made regarding the 2020 church staffing decisions. The team of former moderators is still working on their recommendation/findings and is meeting again Monday, June 18. Question: Should this team have more diversity. This team is identifying a process and the Church Council has the voting rights. There was also concern about the lack of a current strategic plan and Rev. Mardis-LeCroy said the long-range planning will be done and it will be a broad participatory process.
  - Staff Report by Rev. Mardis-LeCroy: The search committee to replace Jennifer Hines position is organized and he encourages us to use our network to help fill the position.

Board of Membership, Terri Sterk

- Membership Roll Update: A letter was sent to 118 inactive members requesting a reply by June 30, 2019. Seven responses were received requesting to retain membership with Plymouth Church. The remaining 111 will be deleted from the Plymouth Church roll.
  - Approximately 230 additional names of inactive members will be considered for another round of letters. This plan will be discussed at our September meeting.
- New member class: Held Sunday, June 2, 2019, 1-4 p.m., with 19 new members joining Saturday and Sunday, June 15 and 16.
  - Seven members were deleted from church roles for a net increase of 12 members for June - August.
  - The next class is scheduled Sunday, September 29, 2019 1-4 p.m. in Greenwood/Burling. The board members will make calls to potential members who have expressed interest in joining the church
- The Board of Stewardship requested participation in the Discover Plymouth class in an effort to educate new members on pledging and increase participation.
- Ingersoll Live: The board is assisting with planning for August 24. A new addition to the Plymouth Church booth is an interactive display using chalkboards. The board assisted in purchasing supplies, painting the plywood chalkboards and set up and tear down of the booth.
- A draft of the Ministry Action Plan for the 2019-20 year is complete.
- One board member resigned and four new board members joined the Board of Membership.

Board of Spiritual Growth, Linda Knodle

- Summer Vespers: Completed July 25.
- Inspiration Lounge Library: Work is close to completion with an estimated opening late in September.
- Thanksgiving Eve Service of Gratitude: Rev. Mary Beth Mardis-LeCroy and Rev. Matt Mardis-LeCroy are taking lead to provide the service and music.
- Board is serving dinner at the Homeless Shelter, Friday, September 27.

Board of Trustees, Franklin Codel

- Month of July: July financial results were positive, with a nearly $50,000 positive variance to budget. The positive variance was driven by:
  1) Non-pledge income coming in slightly better than expected, likely driven by statements being mailed out.
  2) Personnel expenses are nearly $30,000 below budget driven by multiple open positions.
  3) Better than expected building and operations expenses. The positive variance in these accounts may not sustain as there is timing and difficult to predict equipment and vendor expenses.
- Year-to-date through July 31: YTD we see just over $57,000 in positive variances. Factors include:
  1) Positive trends in personnel expenses—we are just over $75,000 better than budget YTD.
  2) Building and Operations expenses are $34,000 better than budget.
3) Negative variances are present in non-pledge income, which is running just over $50,000 less than budget and in new member pledge income. YTD we have received only $290 of new member pledge income and budgeted $26,000 for the year.

- We are currently forecasting usage of $80,000 of reserves versus a budgeted amount of $86,000. It is likely that in the next two months positive variance in personnel will continue, which will help to reduce reserve usage.