PLYMOUTH CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Church Council Minutes, January 28, 2020, Greenwood Room
Sally Pederson, Moderator; David Johnson, Moderator-Elect

Voting Members Present: Franklin Codel, Judy Diedrichs, Pam Duffy, Jodi Gruening, Irene Hardisty, David Johnson, Linda Knodle, Jon Merkle, Alex Moon, Rocky Morton, Sid Ramsey, Jon Reinders, Terri Sterk, Bonnie Sunderlund, Elizabeth Talbert, Lorna Truck, Linda Wilker

Voting Members Absent: Wendy Bellus, Jason Dreckman, Eliza Ovrom

Others Present: Mary Ann Beard, Deb Brookhart, Reverend Mary Kate Buchanan, Jay Eaton, Christopher Goodson, Reverend Nikira Hernandez-Evans, Karen Jeske, Shana Johnson, Pam Kenyon, Reverend Doctor Matthew Mardis-LeCroy, Sally Pederson, Mary Riche, Shelly Soorholtz, Reverend LeAnn Stubbs, Emily Tripp, Susan Waller

Introductions & Welcome: Sally Pederson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.


Minutes: November 26, 2019—Motion to approve, David Johnson; second, Rocky Morton. Minutes approved as corrected.

SPECIAL REPORTS AND OLD BUSINESS
Subject: Director of Child and Family Ministries Search Committee, Rev. Matt Mardis-LeCroy
• Reviewed the committee’s processes and last year’s search events.
• Met in January 2020 to review the search status. Will consider either a minister or lay director to fill the position.
• Job posting is now online and there is no deadline for submissions.

Subject: Update on Strategic Plan 2020, Pam Kenyon
• Submitted update to Church Council members.
• Have been meeting on Sundays since September 29, 2019.
• Have interviewed a number of churches in and out of our immediate area.
• Need to better document committee activities for future committees.
• Discussed the process for assisting church members in answering six questions for the Congregational Triad Conversations.

Subject: 2020 Plymouth Church Budget Presentation, Emily Tripp, Franklin Codel, Pam Duffy
• Board of Trustees began budget planning in October 2019, including a review of the budget-creation process.
• Discussed the use of the church’s financial reserve. Plymouth Church ended 2019 with a $116,000 financial surplus.
• Non-pledge income was in arrears during most of last year, but was bolstered by a $120,000 bequest toward year end.
• 2020 budget projection was presented. Copy attached.
• Franklin Codel moved acceptance of the 2020 Plymouth Church Budget. Motion approved.

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 was the presentation, discussion and approval of the 2020 Plymouth Church Budget.
  • Trustees also passed a policy to manage growing reserves as a percent of the annual budget.

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

Personnel: No report.

Plymouth Foundation: No report.

Plymouth Women: Bonnie Sunderland
  • Next Lunch & Learn is February 20, 12 noon, in Waveland. The program will be presented by members of Plymouth Church’s Anti-Racism Committee discussing the 1619 Project.

Stephen Ministry: Deb Brookhart
  • New training class scheduled for January 2020.

Transition into Ministry (TiM): No report.

NEW BUSINESS: None.

Member at Large: Rocky Morton
  • As a member of the Governance and By-Laws Committee, provided an update to Church Council members on the progress of the committee.

STAFF REPORTS
Rev. Mary Kate Buchanan
  • Working in several different areas within the church.
  • Will be part of the leadership for the Boundary Waters trip this coming August.

Christopher Goodson
  • Music is something you experience each week in worship. Very excited to be here.
  • Church musical specials are now available on YouTube.

Rev. Nikira Hernandez-Evans
  • Waiting for a call to new ministry.
  • Working in several different areas within the church.

Karen Jeske
  • Searching for our next Transition into Ministry (TiM) minister.
  • Two candidates will be here the weekends of February 2 and 9.

Rev. LeAnn Stubbs
  • Thirty-two stained-glass angels have been given to people who had experienced a death. She shared an email from a gentleman who had received one.
  • Thanked God for our church’s sharing with others.

Emily Tripp
• Budget has been the focus.

Susan Waller
• Matins will make 750 pizzas Saturday, February 1, for distribution on Sunday, February 2, for the NFL Super Bowl.
• Colorado is the destination for the Matins June trip.
• Working on the annual Matins garage sale.
• MatinsTube variety show coming up.
• Held a retreat Sunday, January 25, with the Matins leadership team.

Rev. Matt Mardis-LeCroy
• Very thankful for the Board of Trustees and Emily Tripp for their work on the budget.
• Send board and committee reports to Kathy Sohn. (She is Paula Wilkerson’s replacement.)
• Requests for any building use, other than regularly scheduled meetings and activities, must be to Kathy Sohn, ksohn@plymouthchurch.com, no later than seven (7) days in advance.

CLOSING PRAYER: Rev. Matt Mardis-LeCroy
NEXT MEETING: February 25, 2020, 7:00 p.m., Greenwood Room

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

Board of Benevolences, Irene Hardisty
• Alex Moon and Irene Hardisty will present Board of Benevolences information at the January 26 New Member class. Due to personal reasons, Marla Lamb-Wilson has resigned, although she plans to stay active with Food Buddies committee. Several board committees have requested to do a “committee fair” between/after church services. Leadership will explore next steps to do so.
• Special Offering Gifts. Total Thanksgiving offering was $10,374 and has been disbursed to recipients. Christmas Special Offering will go to Everybody Wins, Dorothy’s House, Cross Outreach, Women at the Well, Kids First Law Center of Greater Des Moines and Plymouth Church’s Pastors’ Discretionary Fund.
• Plymouth Church Family Promise. Plymouth Church is hosting families January 19-26. Plymouth Quilters completed comforters, quilts and baby bunting bedding for Family Promise rooms.
• Food Buddies/DMARC Pantry. Pursuant to joint food collection efforts with the Food Pantry committee, $500 savings in food purchases were achieved for Food Buddies budget for the September—December months.
• Food Pantry. DMARC plans to have a booth at the Downtown Farmers’ Market this summer and will be seeking volunteers to staff it. Plan to post Current Happenings communication when more is known about this initiative/opportunity to volunteer.
• Shelter Meals. The committee and board leadership plan to meet with CISS to learn about current needs and assess if current Plymouth Church activities serve these needs. Additionally, the committee is evaluating the shelter meal schedule and process.

Board of Christian Education, Jon Merkle
• Our Whole Lives (OWL) classes are underway for K-2nd Graders. Twenty-nine children are registered! The classes run for eight weeks and will conclude on March 8.
• The board served a meal at Central Iowa Shelter and Services on January 26.
• Our program survey has been completed and we are planning on opening it up to the congregation to answer the survey in March.

Board of Christian Stewardship, Pam Duffy
December 2019 and January 2020 Activity
• Received resignation of Bill Sikute December 1, 2019.
• Reviewed tactics and communications of stewardship campaign December 3.
• Conducted 2020 Stewardship Campaign November 16 to December 31.
• Launched successful Financial Peace University classes January 5, 2020.
• Followed up on non-returned pledge cards with phone calls January 14.
• Met with Finance Committee/Board of Trustees, Pam Duffy, Chair, January 15/21.
• Attended Discover Plymouth Class, Pam Duffy, January 26.

Summary: 2020 Stewardship Campaign

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pledge Units</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th></th>
<th>2020*</th>
<th></th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Change</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>202**</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>-16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Pledges</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>+2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased Pledges</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>+15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decreased Pledges</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>-1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Pledge Units</td>
<td>613</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>613**</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* To Date 1-28-2020
** Expected with follow-up (includes ACH and electronic payments)

Stewardship Results
• Shorter campaign did not appear to impact rate of returned pledges and follow-up.
• Increased communications via email, robo calls, Contact, and other announcements compared to 2019 appeared effective to increase new pledges.
• Goal of 49 new households exceeded. New pledges up 2% from 2019, 54 to 68.
• Households increasing pledges up by 15% over 2019, from 172 to 266.
• Total pledges remained flat at estimated 613 for 2020.
• Increased pledges for 2020 not sufficient to offset decreased or lost pledges for 2020.

Future Action Steps
• Study "Other" member giving category and create plan to cultivate those givers.
• Analyze membership database to determine further follow-up approaches and tactics.
• Recommend assessment of impact of special campaigns on stewardship patterns.
• Recommend Strategic Planning Committee consider membership demographics, societal trends and church-giving patterns in their recommendations.

Board of Deacons, Jodi Gruening
• Junior Deacon 2020-2021. Julie Carroll, thank you for your service.
• Strategic Planning update. Sid Ramsey invited us to join the pilot listening session on Sunday, January 19, 5:15 pm in Waveland Hall. The committee would like to test the questions/process before finalizing and rolling it out. If you are interested, please email Sid to let him know.
• Christmas Eve gratitude. The committee appreciates everyone’s service and the deacons appreciate the snacks/food provided by Jodi and Debbie!
• Shrove Pancake Supper. Dean Gillaspey passed around the sign-up sheet for ticket sales and duties for the supper, Tuesday, February 25. He has confirmed with Chris Cakes and reviewed all of the other details with Cindy Eaton-Eklund and Emily Tripp. The committee asked the deacons if we should specify a group/agency for donated tickets and the board decided to let the individuals decide where to donate.

Board of Membership, Terri Sterk
• Two hundred thirty (230) inactive members were mailed letters to assess their interest in continuing membership at Plymouth Church. A reply was requested by December 15, 2019, resulting in 201 inactive members deleted from church roles and 29 who were moved to active.
• A query totaling 1,862 active members who have not attended a service in more than two years is being reviewed by Nancy Bassett. She is cross referencing this group to determine if any of the 1,862 have contributed. The remaining will receive letters.
• Tracking missed attendance. Determine if a process should be established for following up with members who are absent from worship. A query will kick off the analysis by looking at members with at least a six-month absence.
• The next New Member Class is January 26 and members will join on February 8 and 9. The board will host a new-member potluck on February 9 for all those who joined in the past year.
• Board representatives for Stewardship, Deacons and Benevolence will join the panel to summarize their board's functions and address questions.
• Annual New Member Potluck is February 9 and includes the new members who joined in 2019, as well as those who join in the next class, February 9, 2020.
• The board Swag Committee continues to research options for Plymouth Church swag to be sold at church during services and special events. Our proposed budget of $10,000 will use the proceeds over the next year. We are planning on offering sweatshirts, t-shirts, cups, hats, scarves and other options. Next step is to secure funding in the 2020 Budget and to proceed with the initial order of merchandise.
• Fritz Craiger has been confirmed as the Board of Membership Vice Chair.

Board of Spiritual Growth, Linda Knodle
• Update on class for first half of 2020, Beth Stelle Jones and Rocky Morton leading. Class is going very well with 13-14 attendees.
• Inspiration Lounge Library is completing the insertion of pockets and cards in the books and will review requests for additions to the library.
• Discussed the future of the Lenten, Advent, summer and Thanksgiving Eve vesper services. As of now, these services are on the agenda for continuation.

Board of Trustees, Franklin Codel
• Presentation with Emily Tripp, Director of Operations and Finance, of the 2020 Plymouth Church budget.

GENERAL FUND
BALANCES
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Income:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Pledges</td>
<td>1,794,128</td>
<td>1,771,971</td>
<td>1,796,359</td>
<td>1,750,000</td>
<td>1,750,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-Pledge Gifts</td>
<td>312,955</td>
<td>320,366</td>
<td>231,087</td>
<td>340,000</td>
<td>285,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Income</td>
<td>72,891</td>
<td>77,673</td>
<td>167,862</td>
<td>64,918</td>
<td>66,500 A</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Income</strong></td>
<td>2,179,974</td>
<td>2,170,010</td>
<td>2,195,308</td>
<td>2,101,500</td>
<td>2,101,500</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Expenses:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Personnel Expense</td>
<td>1,421,284</td>
<td>1,469,940</td>
<td>1,329,815</td>
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<td>1,412,140 B</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christian Education</td>
<td>12,875</td>
<td>12,080</td>
<td>16,808</td>
<td>22,055</td>
<td>11,000 C</td>
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<td>Membership</td>
<td>2,896</td>
<td>2,416</td>
<td>4,171</td>
<td>5,400</td>
<td>5,250 D</td>
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<td>Music and Fine Arts</td>
<td>24,295</td>
<td>24,643</td>
<td>25,594</td>
<td>25,395</td>
<td>27,600</td>
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<tr>
<td>Benevolence</td>
<td>134,066</td>
<td>134,784</td>
<td>134,411</td>
<td>135,408</td>
<td>135,408</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christian Social Action</td>
<td>18,077</td>
<td>26,658</td>
<td>21,549</td>
<td>27,750</td>
<td>23,150 E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Boards/Committees</td>
<td>27,220</td>
<td>23,618</td>
<td>20,054</td>
<td>25,200</td>
<td>10,200 F</td>
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<tr>
<td>Building/Operations</td>
<td>520,314</td>
<td>519,881</td>
<td>514,936</td>
<td>561,600</td>
<td>520,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>All Other</td>
<td>9,858</td>
<td>11,945</td>
<td>11,589</td>
<td>(25,900)</td>
<td>15,000</td>
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<td><strong>Total Expenses</strong></td>
<td>2,170,885</td>
<td>2,225,965</td>
<td>2,078,926</td>
<td>2,078,926</td>
<td>2,159,748</td>
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<td><strong>Net Reserve (Use)/Addition</strong></td>
<td>9,089</td>
<td>(55,955)</td>
<td>116,381</td>
<td>86,000</td>
<td>(58,248)</td>
</tr>
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</table>

A Plate offerings $27k; Building use $13k; Nursery $6.5; Bequests $10k; Interest/Dividends $10k
B Assume 2% increase for Program/Support/Custodial. Budgeted increases for Special Function Music Staff. New CE Director starts 5/1/20. Two staff members waive medical and dental coverage.
C Vacation Bible School covered by Foundation grant; Sunday School curriculum developed internally is utilized -$4k
D 100% all SWAG purchased for resale is sold in 2020
E RENEW budget consistent with 2019 expenditures
F TiM is funded outside of the operating budget using resources available