PLYMOUTH CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Church Council Minutes, May 26, 2020, Zoom Online
Sally Pederson, Moderator; David Johnson, Moderator-Elect


Voting Members Absent: Eliza Ovrom, Jon Reinders

Others Present: Mary Ann Beard, Reverend Lindsey Braun, Reverend Mary Kate Buchanan, Christopher Goodson, Karen Jeske, Shana Johnson, Reverend Doctor Matthew J. Mardis-LeCroy, Sally Pederson, Shelly Soorholtz, Emily Tripp

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

Devotions: Sid Ramsey: Shared his feelings about enjoying having some of the “busyness” removed from his life during this time of staying at home. He also spoke about reconnecting with some friends, and for having time to have a clearer head about what is important in his life. He also feels he has had more time for his good friend, God.

Minutes: April 28, 2020—Motion to approve, David Johnson. Second, Pam Duffy. Minutes approved as corrected.

SPECIAL REPORTS AND OLD BUSINESS

Subject: Financial Update and PPP Review, Emily Tripp
• Reviewed year-to-date through April 2020. See Financial Review attachment.
• Will use $92,000 of the church’s financial reserve for this year’s expenses.
• Application for the federal Paycheck Protection Program was approved. The church received $207,000 to help cover costs of salaries and utilities.

Subject: TouchPoint and Website Update, Emily Tripp
• Online training has been provided for staff. Recent online training was provided for lay leaders.
• New software is a more direct communication system with records kept on the system.
• Will resume and complete data cleanup. Will do two additional test imports of data followed by a third live import.
• Planning on going live in late summer and ramp up for the new program year.

Subject: Staffing Responsibilities Update, Rev. Matt Mardis-LeCroy
• Rev. Lindsey Braun’s title has changed to Minister of Vitality and Outreach. She will continue with confirmation responsibilities and provide community outreach.
• Rev. LeAnn Stubbs’ title has changed to Minister of Care and Connection.
• Rev. Mardis-LeCroy becomes staff liaison to the Board of Membership and Rev. Stubbs becomes staff liaison to the Board of Spiritual Growth.

Subject: Director of Child and Family Ministries Update, Rev. Matt Mardis-LeCroy
• Search continues.
• Committee interviewed one person, with another interview scheduled for tomorrow morning, Wednesday, May 27.

Subject: Board of Social Action Open Position, Elizabeth Talbert
• Moved Wendy Knowles for the open board position. Motion approved.

Subject: Plymouth Church Foundation Open Position, Mary Ann Beard
• Moved Mark Schulling for the open board position. Motion approved.

Subject: Appointment of Church Health and Safety Task Force, Rev. Matt Mardis-LeCroy
• Changed language for the church’s closing to “Closed Until Further Notice.”
• Question is how do we gather as a church? We need a process for bringing the congregation back together. Following is a list of task force members.
  o Julie Carroll, Teacher, Rising Junior Deacon
  o Cathy McMullen, Botanist and Deacon
  o Emily Pontius, Attorney, Immediate Past Chair of Personnel Committee
  o Dr. Priscilla Ruhe, Physician, Deacon
  o Bill Wedeking, Architect, Plymouth House and Space Committee, Deacon
  o Dan Olson, Facilities Manager
  o Rev. LeAnn Stubbs, Minister of Care and Connection
  o Emily Tripp, Director of Finance and Operations
  o Rev. Matt Mardis-LeCroy, Senior Minister
• Motion to accept the above persons as task force members, Elizabeth Talbert. Second, Rocky Morton. Motion approved.

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

Christian Education: No report.

Christian Social Action: Report submitted by Jon Reinders is attached.

Christian Stewardship: No report.

Deacons: No report.

Membership: Report submitted by Terri Sterk is attached.

Music and Fine Arts: Report submitted by Judy Diedrichs is attached.

Spiritual Growth: Report submitted by Linda Knodle is attached.

Trustees: Covered in Special Reports and Old Business.

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

Personnel: No report.

Plymouth Foundation: No report.

Plymouth Women: No report.

Stephen Ministry: No report.

Transition into Ministry (TiM): No report.

NEW BUSINESS: None.

Member at Large: Rocky Morton
  • Reported that the By-Laws Committee is continuing its work.

STAFF REPORTS: Answering question about what has been learned during the Covid-19 shutdown.
Rev. Lindsey Braun
- Has learned a lot of technical skills during the shutdown.
- Big thing learned: Form of what we do may change, but the meaning we carry is a constant. Opportunities for connection exist.
- Confirmands currently are in a holding pattern.
- Challenges are being faced by parents having to wear so many different hats.
- Excited about the new portfolio connected with her title change.

Rev. Mary Kate Buchanan
- Has learned a lot about tech and self-care.
- Learning curve of technology is a challenge.
- Realizes she has a limited time at Plymouth Church to deepen relationships.
- Sharing some of her passions, like cooking together, is sacred. Learning that things that seem mundane are not necessarily so.

Christopher Goodson
- Discovered that choral music is a low-tech enterprise.
- Adapting to virtual environment has been a challenge. Has become a one-man production team for Sunday worship.
- Avoiding housework and thesis is not a result of being too busy.
- Thinking about launching a new choral-music program.

Karen Jeske
- Learned she has more species of birds in her yard than she ever knew.
- Neighbors are a joy and friends are wonderful, even from a distance.
- Her husband is funny!
- Plymouth people are determined to be the church.
- Saying goodbye to Rev. Nikira Hernandez-Evans during these conditions is difficult. As is bringing on our next TiM Associate Minister.
- Finding meaningful ways to connect is important. Thus the study of the book, The Heart of Christianity, by Marcus Borg.

Emily Tripp
- Has learned the lesson of the importance of resiliency and adapting to change.
- There are going to be good days and bad days. Nothing is constant.

Susan Waller (Presented by Rev. Mary Kate Buchanan)
- Can do online youth ministry.
- Met weekly online on Tuesday evenings and Wednesday afternoons.
- Writing to older Plymouth Church members.
- Doing mobile visits to Matins Choir members. Matins spirit is strong.
- Not as worried about the youth ministry as she is worried about who is not showing up.

Rev. Matt Mardis-LeCroy
- Personal learning: How much he relies on the village to help raise his children. Never will take these folks for granted again.
- Learned how much his children want time with their mom and him. It’s humbling.
- About Plymouth Church: This congregation has a tremendous capacity for adaptation.
- Challenge: There are some things we just can’t do on Zoom. For example, get a new strategic plan in place. That needs buy in from the congregation.
- Wilderness: Leave what was familiar and go to something new, but you are not there yet. Also, the place of transformation and clarity and what God is calling us to do.

Sally Pederson
- Thanked outgoing chairs and work done by staff and volunteers. Welcomed new chairs.

David Johnson
- Thanked Sally for her leadership, and welcomed Jodi Gruening as the new Moderator-Elect.
CLOSING PRAYER: Rev. Matt Mardis-LeCroy

NEXT MEETING: June 23, 2020, 7:00 p.m., Zoom Online

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

Board of Benevolences, Irene Hardisty
- Food Pantry and Food Buddies. Continue to encourage cash donations to Des Moines Area Religious Council (DMARC), which may be done by making a contribution via the Plymouth Church VIRTUAL DRIVE at www.dmarcunited.org/donate/virtual-drive/plymouth. Additionally, DMARC is seeking volunteers for home deliveries of food packages. Signing up to be a food deliverer can be done at www.dmarcunited.org/volunteer. These committees continue to run Plymouth Church articles on donation needs for DMARC.
- Family Promise. Will be hosting again May 31–June 6. The current plan is for the homeless families to stay at Westminster Presbyterian Church. Plymouth Church volunteers will drop off meals, supper and Saturday breakfast, and an overnight person.
- Easter Special Offering. Collection totaled $16,275, which was slightly more than last year. The collections were gifted to the following initiatives: 10% to the Plymouth Church Pastors’ Discretionary Fund, with the remainder equally divided among:
  - Central Iowa Shelter & Services (CISS) – Mulberry Farm & Food
  - Cross Outreach – Homeless Prevention
  - US Committee for Refugees – Refugee Wellness Program
  - Youth Emergency Services & Shelter (YESS) – Special Needs Fund
- Evening shelter meals. Meals provided will continue throughout the summer, 26 and 27 of the month. Volunteers inside CISS building is still limited; therefore, boards and committees responsible for the meals are instructed to plan to drop off the meal, which is served by CISS staff, or donate sufficient funds, $300, to cover a meal. Most committees are donating funds to cover the meal, plus extra funds to help cover other CISS costs, such as staffing. Additionally, Plymouth Church boards and committees should anticipate a new process for signing up to serve the CISS meals. The Shelter committee is exploring whether a Sign-up Genius is feasible.
- The board has continued dialogue with local COVID-19 front-line, non-profit initiatives as it seeks to be aware of community needs. The UCC committee also continues to monitor communication from the wider UCC and share with relevant other Plymouth Church groups.
- Career Closet and furniture pickup. These activities are on temporary hold due to COVID-19.
- Board leadership team plans to convene with Rev. Lindsey Braun and Rev. Nikira Hernandez-Evans as it ramps up for program year 2020-2021.

Board of Christian Stewardship, Pam Duffy
- The board met by Zoom on May 5, 2020, with special agenda item to discuss future collaborations with the Board of Trustees, as well as current church finances. The chair and vice chair of the Board of Trustees, Franklin Codel and Lorna Truck, attended for a portion of the meeting. The pattern of pledging for 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 was reviewed. Franklin and Emily Tripp reviewed the categories of giving, 2020 budget and pledge income through March 31, 2020. The Board of Christian Stewardship agreed that the Board of Trustees chair and vice chair will attend on a quarterly basis.
- Courtney Rife, Pam Duffy and Linda Wilker met after the Annual Meeting to brainstorm tactics for the board to participate in activities suggested in J. Clif Christopher's book Whose Offering Plate Is It: New Strategies for Financial Stewardship, previously distributed and discussed at the April 7, 2020 meeting. The new board will take these up at the first meeting of the program year on June 2, 2020.
- Planning for the 2021 stewardship campaign will commence during the summer months.

Board of Membership, Terri Sterk
- Plymouth SWAG. Items are ready at Broken Arrow and Jen Jensen will pick them up and coordinate with Rev. Matt Mardis-LeCroy to get in the building to organize the merchandise to be ready for sales when the church opens.
- New Member Class. The next New Member Class is scheduled for Sunday, June 7, to be held via Zoom. The board will follow up with prospective members to confirm interest in attending the class. Board and committee chairs are invited to join the panel. New members will need to join in absentia. Photos of the new members can be included in the Contact newsletter.
- New Board Members. Four new board members were approved for three-year terms, and two additional adjunct members are approved for one year. Warren Taylor is recommended to join for a one-year term. Terri will obtain Church Council approval to add Warren to the board roster.
• New Officers. Fritz Craiger will become Chair in June, Doug Rumples will serve as Vice Chair, Maggie Tillman will be Secretary and Jennifer Jensen will manage SWAG sales as Treasurer.

Music and Fine Arts, Judy Diedrichs
• Two new board members. Chloe Bodenhamer is filling out the remaining two years of Linda Vanderpool’s term. Lorenzo Sandoval is filling out the remaining two years of Chris Hunter’s term.
• Plymouth Foundation grant. We celebrated news we received a $60,000 grant for restoration of the piano in Rehearsal Hall. Once restoration is completed, this piano will become our performance piano in the Sanctuary and the current piano in the Sanctuary will move up to Rehearsal Hall.
• New risers. Our request for additional risers for the Sanctuary was also approved. This will give us more flexibility for future performances, and this fall we began to see services posted to YouTube as well as broken into segments so that musical performances or a sermon could be easily shared. That investment of time and resources has paid huge dividends with the current Covid-19 situation.
• Shelter Meal. The board is responsible for a Homeless Shelter meal in July. Christopher Goodson outlined the changes because of Covid-19. We agreed to simply donate funds to the shelter in lieu of preparing a meal.

Board of Spiritual Growth, Linda Knodle
• Inspiration Lounge Library. Discussed establishing a committee to oversee the maintenance of the library.
• Staff liaison. Rev. LeAnn Stubbs will join the board as staff liaison.
• Summer Vespers. Received a $1,200 grant from the Plymouth Church Foundation to cover expenses incurred for the Summer Vespers.
• Larissa Hadley and Shari Simmons are new board members. Amy Anderson, John Childers and Linda Knodle have completed their terms. Anne Stelle has resigned from the board due to a move back to the Chicago area.
Plymouth Church Financial Summary
April-20

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>By Summary P&amp;L Line Item</th>
<th>Actual</th>
<th>Budget</th>
<th>Variance</th>
<th>Forecast</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>April YTD</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Income</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Pledges</td>
<td>657,946</td>
<td>724,977</td>
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<td>Non-Pledge Gifts</td>
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<td>95,838</td>
<td>29,967</td>
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<td>Other Income</td>
<td>8,938</td>
<td>12,239</td>
<td>(2,301)</td>
<td>56,5</td>
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<td><strong>Total Income</strong></td>
<td>793,689</td>
<td>833,054</td>
<td>(39,365)</td>
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<td><strong>Expense</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Personnel Expense</td>
<td>450,189</td>
<td>441,971</td>
<td>(8,218)</td>
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<td>All Other Expenses</td>
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<td>222,778</td>
<td>6,048</td>
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<td><strong>Total Expenses</strong></td>
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<td>664,749</td>
<td>(2,170)</td>
<td>2,135,6</td>
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<td><strong>Addition to/Use of Reserve</strong></td>
<td>128,771</td>
<td>168,305</td>
<td>(41,535)</td>
<td>(92,3)</td>
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