Voting Members Present: Alex Moon, Amy Anderson, Bonnie Sunderland, David Johnson, Doug Rumple, Liza Ovrom, Elizabeth Talbert, Erin Davidson-Rippey, Fritz Craiger, Irene Hardisty, Jeff Marks, Jodi Gruening, John McCormally, Julie Carroll, Linda Wilker, Lorna Truck, Lynn Hicks, Matt Harvey, Shari Simmons, Sid Ramsey, Wendy Bellus

Voting Members Absent: Lori Fenton


Introductions & Welcome: David Johnson called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

Devotions: N/A

Minutes: November 24, 2020 - Minutes approved as amended and distributed.

SPECIAL REPORTS AND OLD BUSINESS

Subject: Financial Update, including presentation of 2021 proposed budget (Emily Tripp and Lorna Truck)

• Opening comments by Rev. Sarai Rice
  • General
    • Number of Christians declining overall
    • More than a 1/3 of millennials unaffiliated with any faith organization
    • Expecting to see an even greater decline in Gen Z
    • Also seeing decline in attendance
    • Sunday isn't working out for people to attend church services
  • Plymouth specific
    • Weekend worship attendance on an annual downward trend
    • Pledges on annual downward trend
    • Annual giving stayed steady or slight increase from 2004 to 2019 but has been decreasing since 2019
    • COVID impacts - difficult to determine what is happening overall
  • Good news
    • Pledge campaign was strong
• New Strategic Plan to work from
  • Stewardship working with consultant to update fundraising approach
  • Plymouth will have a new senior minister within the next year or so to guide the Church

• Lorna Truck discussed Trustees proposal for 2021 operating budget
  • Addition of 1 FTE and 1 part-time position
    • FTE - Child & Family Ministries, Part-time - volunteer coordinator
  • 2% COL raise
  • Small bonus pool for COVID reasons
  • Equalizing pension benefits
  • Smaller building maintenance spend
  • Boards budgeted at 2020 spend
  • Some reductions in special functions personnel
  • Proportional reduction in Churches Wider Mission contribution
• Emily Tripp discussed actual 2020 spending vs budget
  • Ended with deficit of $262,000 due to lower than expected pledge income (budgeted for a $58,000 deficit)
  • With support of $207,000 COVID PPP loan forgiveness, expecting a $66,000 end of year deficit in proposed 2021 budget
• Opportunities for future growth
  • Considering bringing in consultant to help church reimagine how the church does stewardship
  • Year long approach vs a 4-6 week push

• *Motion to approve Trustees 2021 proposed budget - Lorna Truck, second Irene Hardisty. Motion approved.*

• Lorna presented TiM budget for approval
  • Decision to approve TiM budget was postponed until February to allow more discussion

**Subject: Senior Minister Search Committee update (Caroline Bettis Valentine)**
• Committee is meeting weekly
• Have spoken to UCC Conference about the resources that they can provide to help with search
• Have reached out to search firms. 3 have responded to request for information.
• Next step is to prepare Plymouth Church’s profile

**Subject: Strategic Plan update (Christine Woods and Karen Jeske)**
• Convening first meeting in February

**Subject: Discussion of board assignments for 2021-22 program year (Sid Ramsey)**
• Given Covid and inability for in-person church services, Deacons are proposing a “redshirt” season option for deacons. This would allow those that want to extend their term for an additional year to do so.
• Discussion to allow this option for all Boards
• Direction given to boards to discuss appetite for this option at February board meetings and bring back to Church Council in February for March
NEW BUSINESS
Subject: Linda Knodle has decided to resigned as Council secretary
• Church Council wants to extend a big thank you to Linda for her many years of service!
• Council members to be thinking about ideas for a replacement

MEMBER AT LARGE (Amy Anderson) - no report

STAFF REPORTS
Rev. Saral Rice
• BLM banner
  • Banners are no longer allowed by city. Need to convert to a sign.
• Shelby database hasn’t function well
  • Difficult to get data out.
  • Business Analyst will help church over next three months to move data over to new platform called Shelby Next

Rev. Leann Stubbs
• Focusing on strategic thinking in all we do, specifically in outreach and vibrancy
• Working on writing curriculum for adult stepping stones
• Digital library is up and running
• Working on drive through Ash Wednesday. Stephen Ministers will be out for 11 hours to help with Ash Wednesday

Rev. Lindsey Braun
• Looking forward to doing more with story telling
  • Upcoming workshop in Chicago.
  • Send Lindsey a note if interested in learning more.

Susan Waller
• Created Star & Light word bags
  • Is a way to keep kids connected
• Feb. 7th is Susan’s 15 year anniversary with Plymouth

Chris Goodson
• Music ensembles are up and running
• Gallery has new installation available on the website
  • Will be able to view gallery in person in February
• Alex Cooney will become Church’s media director. He will be working on:
  • Improved audio recording
  • Adding a phone streaming option for weekend services
  • AV kit on a cart for in-person presentations
  • Organizing and inventorying all of church AV equipment

Rev. Mary-Kate Buchanan
• Has been working with a large group on revision to Discover Plymouth Class for new members
Georgia Sheriff
• Completed Project Memories 2.0
  • 49 people received gifts
• Collected over $5,000 for three schools focused on getting winter clothing for kids
• Created Advent activity bags for families
  • 142 children involved in effort
• Now offering church school on Sundays along with Wednesdays
• Starting to plan for Vacation Bible School

Rev. Rushing Kimball
• Inspired by Stewardship Board, has been leading the charge in thinking about how to revise Church's overall approach to stewardship

Cindy Eaton-Eklund
• Added to Plymouth home page the four ways that people can worship online
  • Should be easier for people to find and access online services

Karen Jeske
• Looking forward to working with Strategic Planning Committee
• Lent challenge

Emily Tripp
• Thanks to Council for great discussion about proposed 2021 budget

CLOSING PRAYER - Rev. Sarai Rice

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

NEXT REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING: February 23, 2021