

ST. PAUL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
COUNCIL MINUTES FROM MEETING OF
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2023

Council Members Present: Aaron Johnson, Suzanne Mrowka, Dan Case, Fred Miller, Toni Hill, Marjorie Barnard, Pam Lange, Jennifer Ruffner, Conrad Heidt, Jeannette Wackro, Interim Pastor Rev Reed, Christian Education/Associate Pastor Cheryl Schalm

Guests: Cindy Romas, Tracy Hoffman, Pastor Cheryl Schalm

Excused: Julius Enesey, Jane Dykowski

Meeting was called to order by President Aaron Johnson at 6:55pm followed by opening prayer led by Rev Reed

COUNCIL GUESTS DISCUSSION

Council Guests Worship Planning has planned worship service through November and began discussion for December. Rev Reed opened the floor for questions or comments directed to worship planning. Treasurer Dan Case advised Worship Planning that usually the last Sunday in September is a fire drill following the benediction. Rev Orlando will be providing pulpit supply the last Sunday in September. Cindy Romas indicated she will place a copy of the last hymn in the cabinet for the acolyte to reference so whoever is acolyte will know when the last verse begins and proceed to extinguish the candles.

President Aaron Johnson invited Pastor Schalm to speak to her communication with Linda Dickman of Christnet who is serving as Interim Director. Linda Dickman reached out to Pastor Schalm regarding the potential of St Paul UCC Taylor hosting a week of evening shelter for Christnet guests in a time of January to be later determined. Christnet is hoping to resume church rotations again for a week at a time. President Aaron Johnson summarized during COVID federal funding was provided for Christnet to shelter evening guests in a hotel. The funding is no longer available to house Christnet guests in hotels. There is an evening shelter run by Wayne Metro that can house 30 people. However, staff at Wayne Metro only allows accommodation for 15 guests. Wayne Metro and Christnet are turning to rotating churches to help with demand which exceeds a wait list of over 100 people seeking shelter in the winter evenings. St. Paul UCC Taylor has traditionally started the church rotation season. Concern over capacity to host and having willing volunteers to assist was raised. After lengthy discussion the Council accepted responsibility to inform the congregation of the Christnet volunteer hosting opportunity inviting Pastor Schalm to share a Moment of Sharing from the pulpit seeking volunteers from the congregation and friends to serve a week of hosting and providing evening meals. Our ability to host will depend on congregational response. Marjorie Barnard raised a fact that guests are no longer required to take a breathalyzer test due to state laws.

Tracy Hoffman informed Council Pianist John Joannette will continue to support the music ministry playing piano. His tenure is not indefinite but for now plans to help us until we find a new organist or pianist. Guest topics concluded.

JUNE 2023 COUNCIL MINUTES APPROVAL AND FINALIZED AGENDA

First motion to approve the Council meeting minutes of the June 2023 was made by Trustee Toni Hill and a second motion to approve the aforementioned motion was made by 1st Vice President Suzanne Mrowka. Motion carried unanimously to approve the Council meeting minutes of June 2023.

President Aaron Johnson invited the council to add or delete items to the September 12 2023 Council Meeting agenda. Agenda accepted by acclamation.

REPORTS & UPDATES

Treasurer Dan Case presented financials for the months of July and August 2023. As of August, budgeted income is **under budget by \$44,108.19**. The majority of budgeted income shortfall is in the weekly envelopes. Income has patterned to be short approximately \$5,000 every month. Budgetary expenses are below projected budget by **30,281.54**. Cash flow is positive bringing in more than we are spending showing an increase in our operational account to pay bills. Trustee Marjorie Barnard made a first motion to accept the July and August Treasurers report. Deacon Jeannette Wackro seconded the first motion. Council unanimously accepted the July and August Treasurer's report. Motion to accept the Treasurer's Report of July and August carried.

Treasurer Dan Case requested budget items for 2024 in planning for the 2024 budget. A timeline to congregational approval of the 2024 budget was presented. Stewardship Sunday will be moved by a week to November 19 in order to accommodate our planned visit from Michigan Conference Minister Rev. Dr. Lillian Daniel who will be preaching November 12, 2023. 1st Vice President Suzanne Mrowka will check-in on commitment cards. Neighbors in Need has been addressed. Rev Reed is planning to write a letter to the congregation regarding Stewardship Sunday.

Rev Reed provided an oral report. Rev Reed will be on vacation returning October 1. We have one potential confirmand. Rev Reed has contacted with the student and the parents and when he returns from vacation he will meet with the student and parents to determine next steps.

Senior Trustee Fred Miller report on Trustees/Buildings and Grounds. The tree work by the parsonage was completed. Light from the street sign is failing. Lights on West side work. Lights on the East side work intermittently. Pipes on pipe organ were recently repaired. Doors, cameras and card readers have been updated. Oral Trustee report approved by acclamation.

Senior Deacon Jennifer Ruffner reported 312 people attended worship in August either in person or on Facebook Live. Trustee Marjorie Barnard made first motion to accept the Deacon's Report. Motion seconded by Trustee Toni Hill. Motion to approve the Deacon's Report was carried unanimously. Deacon Conrad Heidt indicated he would be resigning his position as Deacon effective December 31, 2023 and will not be serving as Senior Deacon so he can attend to personal care. Jennifer Ruffner will fill Conrad's final year as Deacon.

Elder Pam Lange presented the Elder's Report showing 67 served communion July 2, 2023. 65 served communion August 6, 2023 and 65 served September 3, 2023. The council is in need of an Elder to serve the remaining three months of the term vacated by Barb Schultz and an Elder to serve the remaining 15 months of the term vacated by Pat Staffeld. Trustee Marjorie Barnard made a first motion to accept the Elder's Report. Motion seconded by Trustee Toni Hill. Motion to accept the Elder's report carried unanimously.

REPORTS & UPDATES cont'd

A question was raised on current security protocols in use during worship service from locking the doors to securing the office. A lengthy discussion followed weighing pros and cons of current protocols while attempting to find balance between being open and welcoming while also providing secure, safe worship. Safety and Security Ministry plans to review the protocols and make recommendations to the Council.

Pastoral Search Committee – no updates. Search committee meets on a monthly basis and when a candidate needs to be discerned. Search Team membership has nine people: Kaitlyn Isaacs, Diane Poet, Marjorie Barnard, John Dykowski, Kari Cappello, Tim Ruffner, Deborah Case, Pam Lange (Elder), Mark Ennis (Chair).

1st Vice-President Suzanne Mrowka provided an oral report post-picnic providing her observations. Several issues developed over the course of the picnic. Communication gaps occurred for setting up the table and chairs as well as logistics in the kitchen. Sue apologized to the Council for what she perceived as disarray. Sue will share her observations with the Cabinet Meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

President Aaron Johnson reported employee annual discussions have been completed. Rev Reed with his Covenant Agreement extended, Office Administrator completed June 1, Groundskeeper/Sexton completed June 5, Music Director completed August 7, Christian Education completed August 28, Office Manager completed September 5. Elizabeth Bisaro who is our Bookkeeper submitted her resignation effective October 30 so she can assume the role of CFO in her family company. We wish Elizabeth the best in her future endeavors. St. Paul is searching for a new Bookkeeper. Remaining staff discussions for Audio Sound and Snow Removal are pending. Report accepted by acclamation.

President Aaron Johnson announced the schedule of acolyte volunteers. 1st Vice President Suzanne Mrowka will complete September. Aaron will cover October and November. Marjorie will cover December. January acolyte is TBD.

President Aaron Johnson presented the agenda for the Council Agenda scheduled for September 16 9am-1pm. Council discussed if moving the meeting to 2024 would be more beneficial for the 2024 Council. A first motion was made to move the Council Retreat to a TBD date in 2024 by Deacon Jeannette Wackro and seconded by Trustee Marjorie Barnard. Motion carried unanimously.

President Aaron Johnson shared the progress of searching for an organist/pianist while we have pianist John Joannette filling in for the time being. 55 organists/pianists were contacted via LinkedIn and Facebook and the American Guild of Organists Detroit Chapter. The Guild will not post a job opening unless the minimum pay is \$30,000 per year. Several music schools and music stores were contacted with no prospect. Several churches are seeking organists and pianists today. Piano tuners are being sought out for referrals to a pianist or organist.

NEW BUSINESS

President Aaron Johnson presented Michigan Conference Vitality Day which is sponsored by Michigan Conference Minister Rev. Dr. Lillian Daniel. The in-person conference is in Owosso, Michigan. The event will host author of ***Part Time is Plenty*** September 30 who will discuss his book and his career as a part time pastor. Rev Reed, President Aaron Johnson, 1st Vice President Suzanne Mrowka and Search Committee Member Deborah Case will attend the event via Zoom at St. Paul. St. Paul financials are very sound and there is no plan to move to a part time pastor. The purpose of attending the conference is only to gather information.

Dan Case provided an update of the new Door Entry System Status. New cards have been distributed. There is a card reader on the pantry door. If anyone needs a card to open the pantry, please see Dan Case. Thanks to Charlie Barnard, Dan Case and Michael Isaacs for all the infrastructure work.

Dan Case raised a need for an Emergency Outreach Program in the event inclement weather leaves members stranded without power. Security and Safety Ministry will meet to develop an action plan and bring recommendations to Council.

Dan Case is interviewing candidates to be our Bookkeeper. Elizabeth Bisaro submitted her resignation so she can attend to her family business as CFO. The Bookkeeper position can be fully remote. A job will be posted with an agency or a service may be hired if a candidate cannot be found.

Round Table Discussion

A new directory from Cathedral Directory is being reviewed. A proof was provided for review. 2024 updated directory may be available for publication in January.

Voran Funeral Homes is covering the cost of 2024 calendars.

Adjournment

The Council moved by acclamation to adjourn the meeting at 8:34pm

Rev Reed closed the meeting leading with the Lord's Prayer.

Serving in Christ,
Aaron B Johnson, Council President, Acting Recording Secretary