

ST. PAUL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
COUNCIL MINUTES FROM MEETING OF
Tuesday, May 14, 2024

Council Members Present: Pam Lange, Jane Dykowski, Tim Ruffner, Sue Mrowka, Teri Staffeld, Toni Hill, Michael Isaacs, Louise Stanek, Fred Miller, and Rev. Linda Anderson.

Excused: Jeannette Wackro, Mark Ennis, and Dan Case

Guests: Office Ministry: Interim Senior Pastor, Rev. Anderson; Office Manager, Sue Mrowka; Administrative Assistant, Cindy Romas

Meeting was called to order by President, Sue Mrowka, at 6:38 p.m. followed by opening prayer led by Rev. Anderson.

President, Sue Mrowka, immediately deviated from the agenda by reading a letter of resignation from Pastor Cheryl Schalm. After many regrets expressed by council members, there was a motion by Tim Ruffner, seconded by Michael Isaacs, to accept her resignation effective August 1, 2024. Motion carried with much sadness. Pastor Schalm will share this with the Sunday School children and congregation on the upcoming Sunday, May 19, 2024.

Returning to the agenda order, the meeting turned to the guests. Cindy Romas was unable to attend and will visit on another occasion. (It is noted that Michael Isaacs needs to get with Cindy Romas on some updates and changes.)

Sue Mrowka, office manager, reported that ordering (expenses) are kept down and things are kept organized. Michael Isaacs thanked her for this work.

Rev. Anderson then related that she was accustomed to working with a different type of office. She is working with Cindy to have more consistency in the bulletin by keeping items in the same places, completing it more quickly, and the difficulty in estimating the number to print. Cindy is a very pleasant person and is very skilled in dealing with those who come seeking help and/or a handout. She again mentioned the complicated organization chart we now have and its lack of showing our outreach. (Michael Isaacs commented that this chart was developed when we were a larger church to show who does what.) Rev. Anderson talked about the importance of showing who we are as a church. Pastoral candidates reference this. She is willing to help with improving the organization chart. (Jane Dykowski mentioned that Teri Staffeld, deacon, has been left off the bulletin the past two weeks. That information has been available in the ushers' room or probably could be obtained by a phone call to one of the deacons.) Rev. Anderson will continue with her "open door" policy. Sue Mrowka added that more congregation members need to be involved in helping. "Too many chiefs and not enough Indians" was her assessment.

Approval of the Minutes: Motion by Fred Miller, seconded by Toni Hill, to approve the minutes of the April 9, 2024 Council Meeting. Motion carried.

Agenda Additions/Deletions: Add to Reports and Updates, Kitchen Manager Update.

REPORTS AND UPDATES

Treasurer's Report: Written report. In the absence of Dan Case, Tim Ruffner reported we are under income by \$20,000, but also under expenses \$18,000. There was discussion about the parsonage.

Treasurer's Report (Continued)

In spite of it being cleaned and ready for move in, prospective candidates want to establish their own personal residence. The facility, built in the 30s, has not been substantially updated. Louise Stanek questioned if the parsonage could be re-purposed. Motion by Tim Ruffner, seconded by Michael Isaacs, to approve the Treasurer's report. Motion carried.

Rev. Linda Anderson: Rev. Anderson had nothing more to add to her comments as council guest. She reminded the Council of the May 20, 2024 meeting she is hosting here. Her plans are being made for the event.

Pastor Cheryl Schalm: Written report. Several council members mused about who would lead Christian Education when she leaves, even though her resignation letter indicates she will help where she can.

Trustee/Building and Grounds: Toni Hill reported that there is not much going on at the moment. The grate in the west drive is broken. Dan Case is trying to fix it. There are nails coming out on the steeple which need to be checked out. At this point, a very tall lift is needed to evaluate what needs to be done. The leak in the family room has been caulked and hopefully remedied. Tim Ruffner and Michael Isaacs need to meet to determine the sign management. The 2nd Vice President (Tim Ruffner) is the liaison for notices going on the sign. Changes on the sign are done remotely.

Deacons: Teri Staffeld reported that things are going smoothly. Attendance remains about the same. Tim Ruffner suggested that a QR Code available at the back of the church could be scanned for the bulletin which could be used in a situation when we run out of bulletins. Sue Mrowka felt additional bulletins can be quickly run when necessary.

Elders: Fred Miller reported that communion numbers are as follows: March 3, 69; Easter, 121; and May 5, 87. Sue Mrowka expressed concern that it has been quite noisy during communion. Michael Isaacs noted it was also noisy prior to start of worship. There is no "writing up" of those being noisy as was suggested. Pam Lange suggested something be placed in the bulletin about noise and especially reverence during communion. A signed Make a Wish Card was received on Sunday noting that communion cards were not in the pews and that they should always be used in the communion service. Jane Dykowski spoke with the writer immediately after the service and the situation is remedied. There have also been unsigned cards regarding grounds. The writer felt grounds were more than cutting the grass and that shrubs were not well pruned. The consensus was that Harold Fick does an excellent job on our grounds even though things may not be done as "you" may do them. Harold has deservedly received notes of compliment.

Search Team Update: Tim Ruffner and Pam Lange from the Search Team shared what was happening. Unfortunately, the candidate they felt was a very good possibility has withdrawn his resume. Pam Lange related there was indication he was having some health issues. Rev. Anderson suggested if a candidate is a comfortable distance away, team should visit that church and see relationship with its members. Tim Ruffner related that John Dykowski was reaching out to some seminaries for prospective candidates. Our being a more conservative church may limit the number of interested candidates. Rev. Anderson related she would be willing to meet with the team. Mark Ennis will make an announcement on Sunday, May 23, 2024.

REPORTS AND UPDATES (Continued)

Kitchen Manager Update: Tim Ruffner reported we passed the inspection with one violation. We need to have a “no smoking” sign on the door. The inspector was concerned about a food truck license because of the trailer used for drive through dinners. Of course, this is not necessary as no food is prepared in the trailer. A smoke detector needs attention in the kitchen.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Council candidates (Trustee and Deacon): Michael Isaacs began with words about having an interested party—it was a joke. Discussion centered around encouraging others to serve the church and God’s kingdom on earth. We need to discuss it as a pleasurable task.

2. Organist Search Update: Jane Dykowski distributed the letter, approved by Tracy Hoffman, that will be sent to approximately 60 schools and music stores. The letter is addressed to an organist/pianist as well as other musicians for variety to our Music Ministry. She also related the process should some candidates be generated with this outreach. A resume will be requested and possibly a face-to-face meeting with Tracy Hoffman, Worship Planning, and other interested persons. (She has reached out to Kari Cappello for a young opinion.) Motion by Toni Hill, seconded by Teri Staffeld, to proceed with the mailing. Motion carried.

3. Report by delegate from DMA Spring Meeting (April 20): Michael Isaacs reported on the DMA meeting he attended via zoom. He felt he had nothing to contribute as the meeting had an inner-city focus. Although there was opinionated perspectives, and some militant perspectives, one of the presenters talked of the inner city struggles, black poverty, etc. as a white apologist. A representative of League of Women voters encouraged women to get out to vote and make voting better.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Pew Communion May 19 – Pentecost (Prayer of Confession): Pew Communion will be served on Pentecost. Fred Miller, Mark Ennis, Tim Ruffner, and Jane Dykowski will serve.

2. Renewing Rev. Anderson’s Covenant Agreement: Rev. Anderson has agreed to renew her covenant agreement for an additional 6 months.

3. Council Representatives for October and December: The representatives will be as follows: June, Pam Lange; July, Pam Lange; August, Tim Ruffner; September, Fred Miller; October, Louise Stanek; November and December, TBD. Acolyting was also discussed. Kaitlyn Isaacs, Debbie Case, and Vicky Grant and the Poets were mentioned as possibilities.

4. Status of Membership Roles: Pam Lange and Dan Case went over the roles. They had not been checked since 2018. They found many young people had not been attending and some were attending different churches. There were suggestions to cut off at a certain age, using the attendance books again, sending Tidings to inactive members, (bulk mailing is cost effective), and Barb Schultz and Rev. Drutchas could be asked to help identify unknowns. The consensus was that a letter first be sent before being removed from membership.

5. Church Re-decorating on hold: After finding there was an effort by a couple of members to remove a number of religious pictures and artwork from the building, the executive committee met to discuss the situation. Their decision was to put the issue on hold and present to the council. As this unfolded, there was a heated discussion of how and who should make such decisions. The discussion generated the following thoughts: change done by committee, building and grounds give approval, do nothing until settled pastor arrives, how to dispose of items, (sell, rummage sale, auction to members), need to change some things indicates congregation is moving forward, are there numerous complaints

NEW BUSINESS (Continued)

about décor, and appropriateness of changes (decoratively appealing). Motion by Tim Ruffner, seconded by Teri Staffeld, to table this issue until the next meeting as proper wording of a motion or resolution could not be reached. Motion carried.

ROUNDTABLE

There was no roundtable discussion.

Motion to adjourn by Toni Hill, seconded by Fred Miller. Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 9:08 p.m. followed by the Lord's Prayer in unison.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane L. Dykowski, Recording Secretary.