**Church Council Minutes**

**July 16, 2019**

6-9 p.m. FCUCC, Basement Classroom

Members Present: Anne Sullivan, Belinda Moos, Dr. Janet Parker, Cara Rothe, Cheryl Clevenger, and Paris Hancock

Guest: Dr. Sheldon Hurst

**1. Opening Prayer and Reflection:** Reading from Discernment offered by Janet and Anne respectively

**2. Art Library Update**: Sheldon presented an update on expanding our library to include an arts library which would be adjacent to the fellowship hall’s gallery. The current library would be moved up to the former minister’s office in the sanctuary which would make it more accessible before and after Sunday services. Sheldon shared his belief that our affirmation of the arts has long been a part of our history even from the very beginning. He referred back to our covenant being supportive of the creative arts as well.

Anne inquired about a small bookshelf with children’s books being placed by the rocking chairs. Paris chimed in that she can do it.

Cheryl asked about placing the arts library in the chapel and a discussion ensued about the pros and cons of the placement of the two libraries. The access to the church library is limited somewhat by it being upstairs, but it is primarily used by church members whereas the art library would be more accessible to visitors if downstairs. Sheldon’s desk placement was also discussed.

Janet noted that she and Cara had discussed that having an arts library would make us unique among the seven downtown church galleries.

Cara added that she would like a *small* team to brainstorm and plan some renovation in the new library, perhaps even a fundraising event. The existing library would be in storage until we’ve had time to update upstairs. Janet added that early September would be a great time to kick it off.

Paris, Kevin and Sheldon can start the move July 25th.

Sheldon mentioned that we can decide later on a catalog program that we might purchase for organizational purposes. He continued that we can present ourselves as a church that integrates art (Grant’s recent marriage of music and poetry by Emily Dickensen is a perfect example) into our spirituality.

Janet asked if Sheldon and Paris could write something up for the bulletin to announce this move, so that members are informed of the upcoming change. They will do this by Thursday.

**3. Minute Votes**: May and June Meeting Minutes were approved.

**4. Core Facilitator Voice**: Anne brought up that the church picnic is upcoming and wondering if she needed support. Janet will text Margaret Baldwin with this inquiry.

Cheryl presented that Potluck in the Park received a large donation previously and the Mt. Tabor Pres. and their coffee shop, Tabor Place, kindly offered to grind the beans for us.

Cheryl was forwarded a communique from MACG (Metropolitan Alliance for the Common Good). We previously paid dues of $2,400 annually to belong to this group which coordinates social justice action in the community. They have offered to half our yearly contribution.

Belinda offered that we felt we weren’t really “getting anything” from belonging to the group.

Cara suggested that we offer our space instead of paying dues. She felt that our leaders tried very hard to act in conjunction with the group.

Janet shared that it can be transformative (if well-executed) based on past experience in Virginia.

**5. Processing CPR Report**: At the bottom of the Executive Summary, it should state that the full CPR Report will be made available to anyone who would like to read it. The Transition Team will present to Council in August the summary of the Report and the release to the congregation.

**6. Family Ministries:** Anne shared that Godly Play is missing pieces of the stories. Sunday, August 25th is the date we’re looking at for a fundraiser. Paris suggested we sell cookies in the shape of the missing pieces and that represents what they are replacing. Selling it to the public is problematic if we were to sell in the alcove. We may need to limit it to a sale in the fellowship hall.

A Godly Play trainer has openings Aug. 17th or the next week in the evenings (19th-22nd) for a training and/or refresher. Anne suggested an evening presentation over a Saturday one. Janet will look further into this.

Anne shared that we still need more people for Family Ministries. Formerly, parents of the kids often made up the group, but we would like to include other members, but none has stepped up.

**7. Review of the Governance Model:** A liason to the Core Ministries was included in the design, but it wasn’t really needed when Elizabeth was here. Now, people leading volunteer teams may feel disconnected because we do not have someone in this role.

Belinda asked if we should act on this before a new minister arrives.

Cara mentioned that “exit interviews” could really shed light on what is working and what is not working.

Core Facilitators will discuss in August ways to improve communication between volunteer teams and the congregation at large. We haven’t had our “Sign-Up” event at tables in awhile, so we’ll do it September 8th. Paris will do some decorations.

“Get Involved” info will also be inserted into the bulletin in September.

Janet has chatted with Mary Lasswell who really wants to be involved, so she suggested

asking Mary to be an after service greeter alongside the Welcomer.

**8. Treasurer’s Report**: The 2020 Budget Committee has completed the search for candidates. We are pleased to announce the following individuals: Daniel Russo, Paris Hancock, Rev. Janet Parker, Cara Rothe, and Belinda Moos. Committee will start to meet in August. Preliminary review of 2020 Budget with Council to occur in October with a final review and vote in November. Belinda made a motion to vote in our 2020 Budget Committee members, it was seconded and approved.

YTD through June- we continue to be unfavorable in income ($16k) which has been offset by expense savings of $51k when compared to budget. June reflects posting of proceeds received by the church for Locus Iste. Pledge income improved and is currently sitting at 108.7% of budgeted target. Year to date unfavorable for General Gifts, Rental Income, and Annual Sublease. Month to date, we are favorable in Rental and Annex Sublease. There was improvement in June’s Rental income numbers and Annex sublease is beginning to trend above budgeted assumptions as the Church has added Metro to its Annex sublease. They are occupying an office and a portion of downstairs as a staging area for their roof project. Cara and team have been preparing analysis on Rental Income given the competitive environment and scheduling between internal and external events. Expense continues to run favorably both Month to Date and Year to Date due to timing on expenses (Transition categories), building related expenses (had no substantial repairs to date), and labor savings (changed Church hours resulted in custodial related changes). Update on Treasurer Semi-Annual Financial Review to occur August 11th.

Janet will write a letter of appreciation in honor of our new grant.

**9. Business Manager’s Report:** Our event income has declined because of increased competition. She suggests that we offer professional lights, increased marketing, referral bonuses, genial service, etc... The discounts to groups who are in line with our mission has not panned out as planned and she’s revisiting it. She’s also researching other successful churches’ efforts and is proposing renaming it for promotion as First Congregational Concert Hall and Gallery Reception Hall.

Janet noted that we should be careful with members’ reaction to this “renaming.” Belinda brought up that Cameron’s report mentioned making use of community rentals of the building to support our church is vital.

Cara is requesting an improved sound system and professional lights for, at the lowest price, $5,000 and at the most $15,000.

Anne suggested that we purchase a wireless projector for use by renters. Cara will get a bid for that.

Cara shared that she has been working on making sure that our church pops up in search engines and has made a lot of progress on this recently.

We approved the expenditure of up to $7,000 for the upgrade of our event space from the Brown Grant.

We approved the expenditure of $ 4,000 of the Evelyn Murray bequest towards the renovation of the upstairs library; Paris suggested it be named in her honor.

Cara shared that we received an AED from Providence Sports Medicine!

A historical plaque has been offered to us honoring our role in Women’s Suffrage in 1905. We hosted their convention that year. Cara will tell them that we are very interested.

**10. Minister’s Report:** Don S. is in hospice and surrounded by family. Janet thanked us for supporting her during her mom’s illness. She listed a number of special services recently and the sermon series on our covenant.

Jocelyn Griffith will no longer be our childcare provider. The runner-up for her position, Maria Felix-Pedro, will be stepping in.

The team working on the new ground lease is in progress and believes our property has become more valuable.

The Transition Team has met three times and Janet would like to get some preliminary research done on what the next clergy compensation would be and how much we could spend on various staffing positions. Belinda will be looking at the market and reach out to her committee. What is affordable? Will that be sufficient? What would be available for this second person?

Paris asked Janet about the workload for a senior minister if we hire a part-time lay person. Janet responded that is doable with Aveena’s support and our other clergy members who help with pastoral care and occasional guest sermons.

Janet’s full report can be found on the Google Site.

**11. Holiday Party:** A holiday gathering for Council will be held December 17th at the Clevenger’s.

**12. Closing Prayer**