

Church Council Minutes
August 18, 2020

Closed Session: Motion passes to approve the compensation package for our new settled minister candidate.

- 1) Opening Prayer by Janet
- 2) Sharing of Meeting Guidelines
- 3) Reflection shared by Margaret from Psalms
- 4) July Minutes were approved

5) Announcements/Updates/Reminders

a) Rev. Janet reported the resignation of Jessie Tarter as Children's Ministry Coordinator, and the desire of Denise Denniston to transition from working with youth to working more intentionally with her wife, Jessica, in the children's ministry program of the church. This fits them better as the parents of three young children. Rev. Janet and Anne Sullivan will be conducting an exit interview with Jessie and discussing how to keep children's ministry going until the new minister arrives.

Anne asked if Jessie's videos were viewed often and Janet shared that families said it was difficult to remember to seek them out. She has asked Andre to make them more accessible.

Janet has chatted with Denise about the Youth Group and the feedback from the youth was that they didn't really want to Zoom because they felt supported elsewhere. Also from that conversation, Denise and Jessica said they might want to shift their attention to younger kids though Denise wants to be sensitive in regards to letting the Youth Group know this. Anne thinks a Zoom meeting might be a good way to say goodbye.

On August 26th at noon, a "Swap Meeting" will be held to share ideas amongst ministers and Sunday School teachers. More information will be sent out soon.

b) Cara shared that the Aid Station had added days and hours to reflect busier protests, however, just recently, it has quieted down. For three nights in a row, no one needed respite. It was decided that we would return to Friday/Saturday nights with an "on-call" plan as well. Eight physicians and eight mental health professionals donated their time and some toilet paper to the effort which led Cara to comment that it's also about building relationships with the community.

c) Our new Nominating Committee (Bill Cunitz, Karen Horn, Margaret Oethinger

& Mary Lasswell) is now complete. Janet asked about the goal for the committee. Anne thought that it's a good time to start searching for the Stewardship Moderator, Council positions, and Treasurer (Ed will ask if Kyle is interested in the position). Ed thinks that Belinda, Ed and Kyle could meet to discuss a stewardship chair and the treasurer position. Especially strong leaders are needed considering the timing this year- right before our new minister arrives.

Cara shared that it's challenging to move the Congregational Meeting to Jan/Feb. when the books go Jan-Dec. Janet offered that St. James could offer advice on that as they do it. If the budget is approved by Council in December, it's probably ok to do a congregational vote in January (it can be amended later). Margaret added that multiple churches make this a practice.

It was suggested that the current Core Ministry Facilitators hold their positions another year for stability.

Both Anne and Paris are leaving Council this year.

6) Extending Janet's Contract

We discussed extending Janet's contract to October 31, and she is flexible about staying longer. She can stay through November, but she has a "theological program" leave coming up for a short time. Janet mentions that if she does leave Oct. 31, we should have a pastoral presence around the election. More clarification about the candidate's arrival date will be known in mid-September. Margaret mentioned that Janet has advised that some time between the interim and settled pastor can be a good idea. Anne raised a motion to extend Janet's time to Oct.31 and Ed seconded. We'll decide upon further dates as more becomes known.

7) Sessions with Cameron

We still have four hours with Cameron as a Council and two hours with the congregation. Cameron is free all of September and the second half of October. Anne asked if we need to prep for this and Janet thinks not; Janet shared that Cameron has planned for a conflict transformation session with us divided into a two-hour session, lunch and then another two-hour session. For the congregation, she is planning on discussing how society is changing in regards to the church and how we can complement that. Janet added that the congregational session could be integrated into worship, but it might be a little long then. September 19th was agreed upon as the date for our Council session with Cameron. Janet will check on the exact times and a back-up date. November 15th is our first choice for the congregation's meeting with Cameron and October 18th is our back-up date.

8) Takeaways from Compassionate Communication Training

Margaret, Anne and Kathy noted that it takes intentional practice, but it's

a great habit to practice. Margaret added that virtual interactions are somewhat stilted now, so it's harder to practice. Cara said that the staff would like to continue with this training so that it is "not one and done." It was suggested that it become part of our covenant, if people responded positively to the idea. Janet thought that we could return to it quarterly with trainings, emails, etc.. to "go deeper." The staff seemed to appreciate the training and thought that it showed our appreciation of them.

Phil offered the idea of a "game approach" reminding people of the "needs" ideas shared in the workshop. Janet asked Phil if he could share more of this "playful" approach idea with her at another time.

9) Blessing for 19th Amendments Events

Cara reminded us that we're on the list of notable places where women's suffrage-related events occurred and to celebrate this we will be hosting a chalk art celebration. Cara and staff will have chalk available and copies of which amendments we might want to write and illustrate on the street in front of the church Mon-Fri 10-2.

10) Treasurer's Report

Ed's full report is in the folder. Ed shared that the agreement to reduce the Portland 5's monthly payment will end September 31st and we will need from them a letter that states that they will continue to need a reduction in the lease and provides supporting documentation for this reduction.

11) Business Manager's Report

Deep cleaning continues! The front doors are finished and are stunning. Also, the air conditioner is working in the annex. As a follow-up to Lillian Green's visit, we are establishing a Racial Equity Team: Grant, Kyle, Sarah, Carter and Cara.

Sheldon is writing a book on our stained glass windows.

Phil is supportive of upping our production value of the service/space and was happy to learn that Cara and Andre had already done a lot of prep work for this task.

12) Minister's Report

Janet's full report is also in the folder. She's excited about the Racial Equity Team. We suffered the loss of four members in the past month and Janet's been visiting multiple members who are ill or on hospice. However, we were also blessed to receive four new members in worship on August 16. Those include two retired UCC ministers, Ann Muir and Bunny Oliver, and two lay members, Rachel Stevens and Jane Brolsma.

She agreed with Cara that the staff found the compassionate communication workshop very meaningful.

Rev. Janet noted that we were going to bring names to nominate for a PRC, but Margaret shared that the candidate would like the Search Committee to be his PRC for the first year.

Before her departure, Janet intends on completing the exit interview/letter of introduction to the new pastor process that she has started with core staff. And she expressed her intention to model a positive experience of a pastoral transition with the congregation. This will include time to say goodbye well to individual members whom she has developed close relationships with, and also affirming the strengths of congregational members that she has to come to know.

13) Prayer Requests and Closing Prayer