

**Minutes of the FCUCC Church Council Meeting
February 16, 2021, 7 p.m.
Conducted via Zoom
and the Vote to Approve the Minutes of the December Council Meeting
Conducted via Email**

Approval of the minutes of the Council meeting conducted on December 15, 2020 and of the meeting to approve the 2021 Budget held January 12, 2021.

The email vote to approve these two items was opened by moderator Margaret Baldwin on February 13. Both items were approved.

Minutes of the FCUCC Church Council meeting, February 16, 2021

Voting Members Margaret Baldwin (Moderator), Kathy Sheibley, Phil Owen (Vice-Moderator),
Present: Christina Hellums, Ed Eggleston (Treasurer), Daniel Russo (Past Moderator)
Non-Voting: Rev. Eric Elnes
Apologies: Cara Rothe
Attendee: Bruce Bishop (non-voting)

OPENING AND REPORTS

- 7:01 1. **Call to Order:** Margaret Baldwin called the meeting to order. She read one of the council meeting guidelines and opened with a prayer.
- 7:04 2. **Treasurer's Report:** Ed Eggleston presented the treasurer's report, referencing two charts which had been sent posted in the Google Drive folder.
Ed reported that, given the current financial situation, we might be able to return \$25,000 to the unrestricted reserve. The application for the Brown Grant is in process and is due this month (February). Ed asked the council just what information they need in order to understand the church's finances and make decisions. No specific request was made.
Phil suggested changing the words "Profit" and "Loss" on financial reports to "Income" and "Expenses."
- 7:17 3a. **Minister's report:** Rev. Eric reminded the Council of the up-coming Drive-by Ash Wednesday imposition of ashes. It is hoped this might attract some attention from non-members. He is continuing to examine the impact of the pandemic on our communal life: What have we learned? What will we take forward after Covid?
Eric reports continuing his process of one-on-one conversations with congregation members. Fifty-five to 60 have been done already and he is getting a good grasp of the congregation's concerns, challenges, and hopes.
Rev. Eric is initiating a series of small groups with various interests and memberships to discuss the future of the church. The goal is to develop and discuss several models for the church within small groups, bring those ideas to larger groups, and finally to the general congregation. Besides developing a vision for the future of the church, this will allow church members to get to know one another better. One of the small groups of particular interest will be of the parents of small children.

7:22 Jack Allman joins the meeting.

- 7:24 3b. **Business Manger's Report:** Cara Roth did not attend the meeting due to illness. Her report is posted in the Google Drive folder. Margaret relayed her concern over the situation on the front porch and some of the houseless folks who camp there. Rev. Eric clarified saying there had been no change in this situation. There are several converging factors: concern over hygiene, neighbor complaints, concern over predatory criminal elements which have infiltrated the porch in the past and may yet again, and current city ordinance which limits our responses. Generally, we want to keep the porch area open for the houseless, but the situation is worsening. Eric added that concern about the houseless population in Portland is of a high level of concern for congregants.
- 7:31 Bruce asked Eric if he had been able to meet the mayor and express our general concern over this issue. Eric replied that he had not yet been able to meet the mayor, but that he wants and expects to meet the mayor and some city councilors. The houselessness issue will be on his list of topics to discuss with city officials.
- Ed expressed his concern over and support of this issue.
- Rev. Eric stated that he and Rabbi Brian Mayer have broached the idea of mobilizing the two congregations to develop a creative solution for the Portland houselessness problem.
- 7:33 Jack supported the idea of interfaith cooperation, and added the idea of intercultural cooperation to form a bigger alliance. He cited his interest in the Chinese Garden and his connections with the Native population as resources.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 7:36 4a. **Minute Taking at Council Meetings:** Margaret called everyone's attention to the schedule for taking minutes at Council meetings. This list, along with the roster of all Council members is in the Google Drive folder. Margaret said members can swap these dates on their own as long as coverage is maintained. She will deal with the vacant slots.
- 7:37 4b. **Clean Air Coalition Letters: Kathy moved the Council approve the endorsement of the latest four letters to local companies.** Daniel seconded. Christina pointed out that there are some typos. Kathy informed us that there are now 14 churches and synagogues supporting these letters. That is up from six a year ago. Pressure from the general public is important in influencing change by corporations.
- Vote: 7 Aye; 0 No. Motion carries.**
- Margaret expressed thanks to Kathy for keeping this going.
- 7:39 4d. **Ash Wednesday Imposition of Ashes:** Margaret said Rev. Eric would be on SW Park Ave, opposite the church.

DISCUSSION ABOUT COMMUNICATION TOOLS

- 7:41 5a. Margaret opened a discussion of communication with congregation members: What tools are being used? How effective are they are? What other tools could be utilized?

General re: *This Week* Newsletter: Concern about the length and email truncating it. Can this be coordinated with / linked to the website? *This Week* has an open rate of about 30%, which is considered quite good for this kind of email, but it cannot be the only means of communication. Kathy raised concern about members who do not use email or

other electronics. There are 10 -12 such members. Christine suggested perhaps a monthly printed newsletter for these folks. There is a general feeling that the Called to Care group is in contact with isolated and non-electronically connected folks, but we don't have details. Rev. Eric said the church has provided computers for two households which needed and wanted them.

Suggest investigating further use of Facebook, Instagram, and TicTok, as that seems to be where much personal connection is made these days.

Jack: On-line worship is not optimal for his family. His desire is to return to the building.

7:54 Bruce: Our communication so far is mostly one-way. We need ways for individuals to respond to communications.

Eric: When Andre can identify visitors / guests, he passes those names on to Eric to follow up. Eric raised the possibility of establishing a group of "virtual ushers" to monitor Sunday attendance and identify visitors and guests.

Eric: Hoping for more two-way communication and to build up a "Communication culture" within the church. He mentioned the "Question of the Week" as a start.

Eric floated the idea of using a series of surveys, primarily short ones, to develop communication with and get feedback from members.

8:02 iii. General: Discussion of Survey Monkey as means to foster communication. Subscription is \$30 per month. No appropriation is needed, but there was a general endorsement of the idea.

CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS: Open discussion about the future of the church.

Brainstorming – Post-pandemic

8:04 6. Bruce: Suggested more frequent congregational meetings with more financial transparency.

Ed: FOC has talked about this and basically agrees.

General: Agreement

Jack: Wondered about our way to communicate and contact people and follow up with visitors

Eric: Yes and No. Andre is referring folks who make themselves known, but it is not his forte or experience. Could he use help? Could we develop a group of "virtual ushers?"

Jack: Social media use? Referenced Rev. Adam Ericksen at Clackamas UCC as model and/or resource person.

Bruce: Congregational meetings are a chance to talk to each other. This is a UCC characteristic.

Eric: Probably more than one congregational meeting in next five months to form framework for going forward and post-pandemic life as church. Wants to develop one or two models (out of hopefully 10 suggested ones growing out of discussions in smaller groups) to present to the larger congregation.

Phil: Raised a concern of adding technology to worship and the cost of doing that well.

Eric: Estimate could run 25K to 50K if done right. We don't want to look like we are cheap in broadcast.

Christina: Likes the building. Hopes we will be able to use it. Suggested in-person worship every third Sunday as an example.

Eric: Other ideas include one Zoom worship per month, half-hour Zoom worship, or more pre-recorded parts. Pre-recording takes coordination, planning, and is a major time commitment for editing, etc.

Eric: How to move Christian Ed into homes. Support parents in educating youngsters in Bible, prayer, meditation. Some precedence in history for this, but parents need support.

Bruce: Would like transparency regarding INCOME on a more regular basis.

Ed: Suggested this information could be posted to the website. Asked for feedback – no objections heard.

Ed: Reminded about the position for Director of Faith Formation.

Phil: Asked Rev. Eric to clarify the ownership of the video and audio equipment he is using.

Eric: All but the computer was bought by Rev. Eric. The laptop belongs to the church.

8:28 7. **Closing:** Rev. Eric closed the meeting with prayer.

Respectfully submitted,



--Phil Owen