

**Church Council Meeting,  
Conducted via Zoom**

**July 20, 2021  
6:30 P.M.**

Present (voting members): Margaret Baldwin, Phil Owen, Daniel Russo, Edward Eggleston, Jack Allman, Christina Hellums, Kathy Scheibley  
(non-voting): Cara Rothe, Eric Elnes, Nan Wagner

**Friday, July 16:** Minutes of the Council meetings from May 18, and June 15, 2021 have been approved by email vote.

1. 6:30 Margaret called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. She reminded us of our guideline, "I am mindful of my own judgments and reactions," and read a short meditation our need for staying connected to, and our reliance on each other and God.
2. **Staff Reports**
  - 6:39 **Eric Elnes** – Senior Pastor – reported that a Video Ask has gone out to develop six key groups to focus on various areas of interest:
    - Potluck
    - 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday worship
    - Zoom worship
    - Technology
    - Coffee House
    - "Agape" groups. These groups will help implement the new worship styles and schedule, and attend to other details in the coming months.
  - Worship in August will be two-fold: a more modest Zoom service at 9:00, with recorded music and a more traditional service in the sanctuary at 10:30. The August potluck will be modest. Eric feels confident the cameras and other technology already purchased will serve us well and reports generally positive response to the monitors in the sanctuary.
  - There remains a question of how and when mask wearing needs to be enforced. (This was discussed at length at item 5.)
  - There is an apparent reduction in Zoom attendance at after-worship coffee hour. The only idea floated was that there are more things to do outside now that the weather has improved.
  - Frank Baldwin will preach on August 15.
- 6:46 **Cara Rothe** – Business Manager – reported that the hiring is going well. (Details can be found in her written report.) She and Jake are planning changes in the format for *This Week*. Comments are welcome. Is *This Week* archived? The general consensus is that archiving is not really necessary as most items are time-sensitive.

*The Pilgrim*. It has been at least a year since one was issued. The general thought is that it has not been missed and would be a lot of work to revive at this point. General consensus: not to worry about it at this time, but there is a concern about members who are not connected electronically. Cara did say that she mails information to four such people on a quarterly basis and suggested that Called To Care might be contacting them as well.

- 7:00 **Ed Eggleston** – Treasurer – noted that the financial statements are in the Drive Folder. He noted no major changes – pledging and expenses are as expected. The Brown Grants have been received for this year. A Thank You note will be sent from Eric for the Grant. How long we might reasonably expect to receive the Brown Grant? This question is a common one for which we don't have an answer and there is hesitancy to press the issue. Nan knows someone who works for the granting organization and may be able to finesse an answer.

It is time to start the budgeting process. A committee will be formed soon. The quarterly statement of giving and an accompanying letter will be going out to members soon.

3. 7:05 **Announcements**

Margaret raised the question of **moving Council meetings to Thursday** as Monday and Tuesday are Eric's days off. Other options were discussed, none of which resolved the issue due to other various conflicts, including Wednesday choir rehearsal. Though rehearsal could be moved to Thursday, that is a more common day for events in the sanctuary. Grant may be willing to move rehearsal to the basement on those days where rehearsal conflicts with an event, but he will need to be asked about the possibility. Council meetings will remain on the third Tuesday for the foreseeable future.

There was a quick review of the **Brown Grant numbers**, though this was more thoroughly discussed under the Treasurer's report.

A search for a **Child Care Provider** is underway. Applications have been received and there are many strong candidates. Margaret, Daniel Russo, and Joanne Albertsen will be interview candidates soon.

4. 7:12 **Summary Reports**

**Christina Hellums** reported on the plan for the **South Park Blocks** and her testimony at the City Council meeting last week. Fifty people gave testimony, 42 or so were opposed to the plan. Another Council meeting is planned for Wednesday the 21<sup>st</sup>. Christina briefed us on the planned removal of trees and loss of parking: approximately 87 parking spaces will be lost. One concern is that the plan for parking has not been finalized, so it is hard to determine the impact. Other issues raised concern traffic flow and ADA compliance.

Significantly, the impact of this plan on the houseless who use the Park Blocks has not been addressed.

Jack pointed out that parking is already a problem in this area. In response to a question from Ed, Cara pointed out that FCUCC is often open to and for the

houseless. They can use the restrooms, get water, sometimes get food, and rest.

**Daniel moved:** The Council authorize a letter voicing our concerns about the South Park Block Plan. Christina seconded.

VOTE: 6 For 1 Opposed. Motion carried.

Cara will send a draft to Eric who will edit and forward to the City Clerk before 9:30 Wednesday the 21<sup>st</sup>.

**Phil** reported on attendance at the **General Synod** workshops. He and Ann Muir attended various workshops. Generally, Phil found that the issues we are concerned with at FCUCC are issues others in the UCC are also working on: Racial Justice, Immigration, and Gender issues, to name a few. He sensed that there are resources at the national level and at the conference level which folks could tap into. He also noted a repeated emphasis on the importance of collaboration with other congregations, denominations, faiths, and with other community partners.

5. 7:40 **COVID Policy for church gathering going forward**

what policy we need for worship and fellowship time in August regarding masks? She noted the rise in infections locally and the appearance of the Delta variant.

Although masks were, “Strongly suggested” on one level, there seemed to be lack of follow-through at the July 11 worship. There was a general feeling of “go with the flow” and many folks removed their masks, including worship leaders and the choir. (Some churches have sectioned off parts of their sanctuaries into masked and non-masked or vaccinated and non-vaccinated sections.) Relatively few folks came downstairs for the fellowship hour. Singing: Can we ask people to mask unless they are singing? Maybe a humming choir. People at the front, even the choir, need to model the behavior we hope the congregation will follow. We have a policy and we need to reinforce it.

6. 7:57 **Appointment of Budget Committee and Stewardship Captains**

This was a heads-up notice. There is a timeline in Church Council policies for making these appointments. No action at this time, but Council will need to move on this in August and September.

7. 8:08 **Discussion of Cara’s compensation package**

(Cara leaves the meeting.) Eric reviewed Cara’s request for a review of her compensation. He voiced his strong support for the move, citing her high level of functioning, the variety of things she does, her many gifts, and the danger she might be recruited by another congregation. He also pointed out that as a “progressive congregation” we should be treating our employees fairly. He feels this is a reasonable request. Margaret agreed, citing Cara’s many responsibilities, and including 24-hour surveillance of the building.

Ed stated that FOC has reviewed this request and has advanced it to Council. He also said, that although Cara asked for a contribution to a 401k, there is a possibility of a better opportunity through the UCC Pension Board. FOC is

following up on that. He pointed out the impact on the 2021 budget would be \$9,000 and in 2022. \$22,000 is accepted.

There may be reason to delay implementation of these changes until after Cara's vacation.

**Ed moved:** "We accept Cara's proposal and authorize Eric and Margaret to negotiate details." Seconded by Kathy.

Would set a precedent for other employees. Eric clarified that other employees have seen recent raises and that Cara is the only full-time employee. Margaret underscored that the part-time employees have had raises recently.

VOTE: 7 For 0 Opposed. Motion carried.

Eric will tell Cara the result.

8:41 Eric gave a short prayer. Margaret adjourned the meeting.