

ST LUCAS UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

SPECIAL CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING

6/3/2021

MEMBERS PRESENT: Paul Simons, Kathy Herron, Ken Hamilton, Don Lang, Debbie Ball, Joy Dressel, Marty Schmidt, Marsha Fey, Gregg Heutel, Jack Laudenslager, Juanita Wagner, Joanne Scheidt, Dave Johnston

CLERGY PRESENT: Rev. Vicki Hampton

MEMBERS ABSENT: Justin Wenk, Carol Stelmach

GUESTS PRESENT: Rev. Carole Barner

The June 3, 2021 Special Council Meeting was called to order at 6:35 p.m. by Council President, Paul Simons.

OPENING PRAYER – Rev. Barner led us with an opening prayer.

COUNCIL INTRODUCTIONS – Council members gave a brief introduction about themselves.

INTERIM MINISTER OF CONGREGATIONAL LIFE CANDIDATE, REV. CAROLE BARNER – Rev. Barner summarized some of the major aspects of her ministerial life. This is her second career and she has served in four different congregations. She has worked in youth ministry (camp ministry) in Columbia, MO. and she created an off-site camp. She helped to begin a weekday children's program at Columbia UCC. Before going to the seminary she lived in Arkansas and was director of a children's program, licensing it as a full time daycare. Her ministry always included music with choirs coming together in the two churches she is currently serving. She was the first pastor in the city of St. Louis City that served two congregations. Rev. Barner feels God calls her to places where new ministries are needed. She's done a lot of collaborative work and has done the intentional interim training program. Rev. Barner is aware that St. Lucas is in between because pastors who have left, but feels that there are other things at St. Lucas that have bubbled up that need to be addressed. She is energized with this kind of ministry.

QUESTIONS ASKED BY COUNCIL MEMBERS

- Paul was asked if he could give council members a thumbnail description of Rev. Barner's duties if we choose her. Rev. Vicki answered and said we are looking for someone to whom the coordinator of youth and children's ministries will report, including promoting family relationships and intergenerational activities, hospital visitations and homebound visits. She would also participate in worship, specifically Saturday evening services. Rev. Barner would report to Rev. Vicki.
- Rev. Barner was asked about having some interaction with young children. What type of beliefs do you have with respect to virgin birth, resurrection, etc.? Rev. Barner said we should be age appropriate with children because young children are in a literal place. She would find ways to be creative to help them understand until perhaps confirmation age. Then, youth confirm THEIR faith as you grow and learn. She stated that In the UCC we don't hand you something you have to believe. There is no DOGMA.

- Rev Barner was asked about office hours and does she have an issue coming out for office hours at the church? She stated that right now she has two offices and two staffs and she would welcome coming into the building.
- Rev. Barner was asked about her IT background. She said she has a little bit of IT experience working in retail and teaching people to use new software.
- Rev. Barner was asked about her association with the two churches she currently serves. Has she terminated that arrangement? She stated that she is still currently there and would appreciate us being confidential. She would have to give notice and her call agreement period states that she must give a two month notice. She would also need a little transition time in addition to the two months.
- Rev. Barner was asked why she was interested in this opportunity and why specifically does she feel she is a good fit. She answered that the spirit plays interesting games in her journey and she likes to walk with people in difficult times. She likes to begin a new church opportunity with a covenant about people's behavior in collaboration to move to a new place. The spirit moves her to work with people who need to heal in difficult situations.

REV. BARNER ASKED QUESTIONS OF THE COUNCIL

If there were one thing you could do differently at St. Lucas, what would you like it to be?

- Council members said that we're yearning for the silver bullet that will reverse the trend. We won't reverse the trend. We need to find who we can be today that includes youth and families. How can we bring back in people to vitalize the church? We would like to see a change in the way we think, concerning being open to new ideas. St. Lucas is very much a church of how we've always done things. Change is difficult but we need to. Some on council wish we could have done this 5 years ago.
- Another said we need to learn how to bring youth back to church. How can we bring youth back to church who don't have time for focus groups to discuss, etc.? Rev. Barner suggested meeting them where they are, perhaps with a dinner for young families. Find out what they need and love them where they are.
- A council member said she has a passion to speak for those who can't speak for themselves. She wishes our church would be more in line with diversity and social justice.
- Another member said that Membership and Evangelism does a faith based reflection after each meeting. Maybe each group can do this at the end of the meeting. Members of our congregation should be encouraged to spontaneously pray.
- A member said that we need to bring more youth to church. Most confirmands disappear. There needs to be a way for them to stick around. Church attendance is way down over the last 6 or 7 years. We used to have 30 plus kids at children's time. Now we have maybe 6. What can we do to bring those families back?

Rev. Barner then said that fellowship is important, in the life of the church, wherever it is. Think about when you have been really impacted in terms of your faith. When did you feel the energy of the Holy Spirit? What is your witness? Members then told stories of circling and praying for someone, doing

mission work in Kenya, high school mission trip experiences, and their own personal experiences with medical operations done on their children.

Rev. Barner was then excused from the meeting.

DISCUSSION ON MOVING FORWARD WITH REV. BARNER - Discussion followed regarding whether or not to vote tonight to move forward. Are there other options out there? Paul and Rev. Vicki said they only had one other candidate and that person did not seem to be the right fit. The timeline was discussed and we are talking at least the middle of August or the beginning of September before she would come on board. How long of a call agreement are we offering her? It was then discussed just what exactly are we approving? To call her? Her salary?

Paul said that according to the Missouri Mid South Conference guidelines, we have to offer any pastor we call the minimum guidelines. For 2021, the category base salary and housing, based on our 600 membership would be \$78,000. Another Missouri Mid South Conference guideline says that the associate minister should make at least 80% of the senior minister. This would mean that we would have to move Rev. Vicki's salary up to \$97,500. The budgeted amount is \$105,000, so we'd still be within that limit. We have \$55,000 budgeted for the associate minister so we'd be over the budgeted amount. This would require congregation approval for the difference.

Questions were asked about benefits? Rev. Barner needs all the benefits, health, pension, FICA, etc. You have to look at all the numbers, not just pure salary. She also is in need of housing because she just sold her house. Our sexton house is empty so that might be an option for her, paying rent to St. Lucas. After much discussion, it was decided that we can't vote tonight on it all. Let's just vote to call her tonight and move forward while we gather more financial numbers.

Dave made the following motion and Joy seconded.

Council will go forward with discussion with Rev. Barner, including holding a Special Congregational Meeting.

Discussion followed regarding the Missouri Mid South guidelines. What if we don't follow them? Are there repercussions? Our church does not really have a 600 member amount anymore. That's just what is on the rolls. Rev. Vicki said that each setting of the UCC is independent from the conference and the association and each church can decide not to abide by the guidelines. There are no repercussions but it is in her call agreement that we abide by those guidelines. We have to maintain confidentiality and can't name her in a congregational meeting.

Motion passed.

ADJOURNMENT WITH THE LORD'S PRAYER - Pastor Vicki led us out with the Lord's prayer.

Marty made a motion to adjourn and it was seconded by Ken. The meeting ended at 8:31.

*Respectfully submitted,
Debbie Ball
St. Lucas Council Secretary*