

SAINT LUCAS UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
June 26, 2023, 6:00 pm - Zoom Hybrid/Room 19

*(*This meeting was called to order at 6:02 pm by President, Marty Schmidt.)*

MEMBERS PRESENT: Violet Brooks/Zoom, Phil Denton, Marsha Fey, Katy Forand, Kathy Herron/Zoom, Donovan Larson, Jack Laudenslager, Marty Schmidt, Paul Simons, Barbara Smith, and Juanita Wagner/Zoom | Eleven members.

STAFF PRESENT: Rev. Dr. Carole Barner & Rev. Vicki Hampton

ZOOM VISITORS PRESENT: Bill Biedenstein, Bill Brinkhorst & Joy Dressel, Dan Herron, Ellen Littleton, and Jackie Zeitinger | Six visitors.

OPENING PRAYER:

The meeting was opened with a prayer by Marty Schmidt.

GUEST COMMENTS: There were none.

CONSENT AGENDA:

- Council Meeting - May 22, 2023, Minutes
- Council Meeting (Special) - June 4, 2023, Minutes
- Finance Committee Meeting - May 15, 2023, Minutes
- Membership & Evangelism Meeting - June 6, 2023, Minutes
- Preschool Board Meetings - May 9, 2023, & June 13, 2023, Minutes

Donovan moved and Jack seconded the June 2023 Consent Agenda as submitted for approval. The motion was accepted unanimously by a show of hands.

A vote was taken to re-approve the April 24, 2023 meeting minutes as one sentence under the Facilities report was modified. The correction relates to the bid received from Kyle's Landscaping. The corrected copy will be released to the webpage. Because of that change, Barbara moved and Donovan seconded the correction to re-approve. The motion was accepted unanimously by a show of hands.

STAFF REPORTS:

Pastor Vicki -

- In addition to her printed report, Pastor Vicki had a meeting with Katy Forand this morning to discuss Stewardship. The main attitude of Stewardship needs to be about engagement and affiliation with the congregation. Future activities and discussions will reflect this.

Pastor Carole -

- A youth group from Monroe, WI will pass through St. Louis on June 30th. They will stay overnight in the Social Hall and use three members' homes for showers. There is a Pastor Carole "connection" as the senior minister of this church was ordained at the Columbia UCC church in Columbia, MO.
- The youth group will be on a float trip July 16th.
- Pastor Carole will be on vacation July 2-9.

There were no questions for the ministers.

FINANCIAL REPORT: Paul Simons updated the Council on the current financial status of the church and presented them with financial statements through the end of May 2023 prior to this meeting.

- As of May 31, 2023, General Fund Cash was at \$664,172 vs. \$555,397 on May 31, 2022.
 - The significant increase was the result of the net receipt from the Employee Retention Credit program.
- Although the May 31, 2023 balance is higher than 2022, it is \$183,900 less than April 30, 2023, due to the following variances:
 - Storm-related purchases, cameras and such, ball field maintenance, and parsonage flood remediation.
 - Plus the church paid the preschool their portion due for the E.R.C. program which was \$125,794.
- Regular Offerings for the month of May were under budget by \$10,000. However, year-to-date Regular Offerings are \$24,000 over May 2022 offerings.
- The E.R.C. money was partly offset by the absence of the Shirley Beyersdorfer Fund, as that fund fell below \$200,000 by December 31, 2022, and therefore cannot pay any money to the General Fund in 2023.
 - May 2023 General Fund Expenses were over our anticipated budget by \$20,000.
- Year-to-Date, General Fund Expenses were over budget by \$29,000, which reflects the above-mentioned expenses, partly offset by the absence of Search Committee expenses.
- This resulted in a May General Fund deficit of \$184,021 but a year-to-date excess of \$50,133, caused by the variations noted above.
- Bottom line the Net Deficit for May was \$179,030, while the year-to-date excess was \$42,236, compared to the May budgeted deficit of \$29,051 and a year-to-date budgeted deficit of \$88,648.
- These variations principally reflect the net E.R.C. monies received, partly offset by storm-related expenses.
 - *(FYI - A gift of \$56K from Shirley Pfister will be reflected in the June report.)*

Paul asked for questions/comments. Barbara asked about the Search Committee Budget since they have not yet spent any money in 2023. If no money is spent in 2023, they will need to make a budget request in 2024 if monies are needed at that time.

Physical Facilities Ministries -

- Donovan has contacted Pat Stephen's family roofing business, in addition to Old World Roofing for bids relating to leaks in the roof.
- A placement marker has been installed above the choir loft for the eventual hanging of the Gross Memorial Banner.
- Donovan has talked with the Sunset Hills PD to discuss 1.) increased patrols to our property due to misuse of the pavilion (they will do this), and 2.) can they provide information to help secure our church during Saturday & Sunday services as well as what type of emergency response skills should we be securing. Their Community Outreach Officer will be in touch with Donovan.
 - Pastor Vicki mentioned Charlie advised her a picnic table was stolen from the pavilion. Donovan was not aware of this. Pastor Vicki and Donovan will verify this with Charlie.
 - Discussion continued about possible camera solutions in the pavilion.
- Marsha complimented Donovan on the resurfaced Preschool Lot, as did the Friendship Village driver!
- Markers have been placed near the Little Free Pantry and the south side of the church for future benches to be placed by Evan Glovanovitz for his Eagle Scout award.
- Donovan invited Violet to talk about the rate increases that will begin soon regarding the sports fields. She's currently in negotiations with Lindbergh Schools. She has recently imposed the new rate for one of our smaller contracts and the coach did not "bat an eye". If accepted by the remainder of the groups, it will be a significant increase in income for St. Lucas UCC. Violet compared our rates to other local

athletics in St. Louis County. The cheapest rate identified was \$18/hour. She used that rate based on expected hours each day multiplied by how many days she expects the team's usage.

- Phil asked for a copy of our current sports contracts to review.

OLD BUSINESS:

>Stewardship of Facilities -

- A letter was recently received by the Council from Supporters of St. Lucas suggesting we market St. Lucas UCC as 1.) a wedding venue in the sanctuary, 2.) rental of the Social Hall since 52 weekends each year are income potential, and 3.) also allow alcohol in the Social Hall. All these measures could increase the appeal and income resources for St. Lucas UCC.
 - Pastor Vicki advised due to the vows she took at her ordination, that type of public event breaches her ethics and morals and she does not agree with that practice. Using the sanctuary as a wedding venue open to all "will not happen on her watch". Each UCC church can do what is best for its own setting.
 - Marty reminded the Council that we tested alcohol consumption for the Youth Trivia Night last March. Katy added this group must not have been aware of the alcohol at that trivia night, even though it was well advertised and attended.
 - These issues have been discussed by the Council multiple times and can be viewed in meeting minutes posted online.
 - The key issue with any of these suggestions is supervision and liability, not to mention marketing the event, scheduling, and clean-up after events. We need the manpower to do this. It would require a substantial investment of one sort or another. A cost-benefit review needs to be completed to determine its viability.
 - Katy suggested performing a "test run" in the Social Hall with members-only of St. Lucas UCC.
 - Marsha mentioned a Methodist Church in Fenton advertises "Hall for Rent". Pastor Vicki likes the idea and she's curious how that church offers such services without detriment to their not-for-profit status. Marsha will contact them.
 - Marty and Pastor Vicki will work together on drafting a letter in response to The Supporters of St. Lucas. All church members are welcomed and encouraged to address a Council member personally or attend a Council conversation. Public comments are allowed at Council meetings if the Council is given advanced notice so persons/groups can be added to the monthly agenda.

>Fence on Church Property - The Hoffs are in possession of the lease agreement drafted by Jeff. Phil complimented Jeff's work on this document. Marty feels confident this issue will be resolved soon.

>Safety Plan - Barbara reported on a YouTube video titled *Security and Faith Episode III: Threats and Responses from UCC Local Churches* facilitated by UCC Pastor Tracy Howe. A Council member from Parkway UCC in St. Louis spoke as well as a minister in Ohio.

- Pastor Vicki's primary concerns for our church are:
 - CPR/First Aid Training
 - Active Shooter Training
 - Disaster Evacuation Training
 - Marty will speak with Terry Marcille.
 - Pastor Vicki will check with her prior church for the resource for their CPR training.
 - Paul reminded the Council of surprise Fire Drills in the past.

>Open & Affirming Update - Per Pastor Vicki, the next steps need to be drafted. Since the Council has approved it and as there is a strong interest in pursuing it, we need to implement a plan. How do we invite people to

participate? Who will be the group to spearhead this? Who do we know that is interested in getting this moving? Who else will be on the team other than Barbara and Cynthia? Pastor Carole added it may be best to have people who are open and focused on building a safe and welcoming space for conversation on this topic. Marty asked the Council to think of some members in the congregation who may fit this description and bring those names forward for discussion next month.

>Accounting Software Update - Per Paul, a group has narrowed the selection down to two companies. The deciding issue is the conversion of our current data with a new company. Jeff is currently waiting for that feedback. Per Pastor Vicki, the initial installation is \$4,600, with follow-up fees of \$375 each month.

>Land Use Task Force - Per Marty, the group is still in the process of gathering information, therefore there's nothing to report tonight... other than (per Pastor Vicki) we are not considering selling off any of our land as has been recently *rumored*.

>Bylaws Task Force - Per Marty, there was a very constructive meeting last week. They've finalized a first draft. In addition to that draft, a companion document will be created to explain why changes have been made. The Council will be the first group to review/make suggestions for the document. In the draft, the old text will be shown as strike-throughs with replacement text inserted. Marty's goal is to have the eventual final copy of this draft available to the congregation by fall. Multiple Council Conversations will be scheduled to discuss the new document so the congregation will understand the process behind the work. The task force wants all dialogue to be finalized prior to the annual meeting in November so the congregation is well-versed before a vote is taken.

>A/V Equipment - Marty added this item hoping a date would be set for the installation of new equipment. That has not been finalized, so an update will be forthcoming.

NEW BUSINESS:

>Funeral Lunches -

- At the last Finance Committee meeting Sue Simmons advised the group that the luncheon for John Gross was done as a gift to the Gross family and the church's fee to the family was waived.
- Marty also advised the Council that Linda Taylor sent a lovely note of thanks and appreciation regarding her mother's funeral luncheon. He sent a copy to the Council and it will also appear in a future eBlast.

>Signage - Donovan found a sign offered through the UCC that states Jesus didn't reject people, neither do we. He thought we could plant it on Denny Road for a temporary show. He feels it's saying we are a different church and we are not hypocritical. He feels this may be something we should consider. The conversation continued on where a sign like this should be posted. Further back on the property? More dialogue continued about the message of the sign. Some felt it was too confrontational/negative... a challenge statement. It could make someone feel defensive. It's not warm and fuzzy. Others were not concerned with the message it sends. More dialogue continued about whether or not it is the type of sign we want at this time. Another point of view was to ask what signage will the City of Sunset Hills allow. After a more lengthy discussion, Donovan asked we let it go. He does not want this to be divisive. Marsha offered she is hearing us all say that we need to formulate our own message. She is not opposed to signage, but perhaps we need to think about how we do this. Marty added we are creating a new identity and he's proud of seeing this Council at work having an earnest discussion like this. Pastor Carole's takeaway from this is we are having a "great conversation". Pastor Vicki added signage moving forward should honor where we've been and who we are now. Marty asked us to pray on it and plan to continue this discussion next time.

>G.E.F./Beyersdorfer Policy - This account is approximately \$650K and is under the jurisdiction of the Council as required by the church's bylaws. It's been seven years since the operation of these accounts was defined. Marty

would like us to review them and make a decision on how we plan to manage them moving forward. The market has changed since then and we have different needs now compared to 2016. We will revisit this topic next month.

>Nominations Team - We need to put together a nominating committee of five people to create the 2024 Council nomination list. One of those five persons on the committee needs to be a current Council member. Presently, there's still an open slot from Jenny Bell's vacancy since 1/1/23. That slot will be a one-year-only term. The other five Council members finishing their three-year terms are Marsha Fey, Jack Laudenslager, Marty Schmidt, Paul Simons, and Juanita Wagner. The high number of people leaving this year is due to the 2023 transition of moving from a 15-member Council to a 12-member Council. Marty has agreed to head up this short-term committee.

>November Meeting Date - After a brief discussion and review of the November 2023 calendar, November 12th was agreed upon and will be set for the next annual meeting.

The Council said thank you and good night to the Visitors on Zoom. Marty closed the Zoom session so the Council could go into a confidential/executive session.

*Note - This ended the Public session of the June 2023 Council meeting.

(Minute marker: 1 hour & 58 minutes)

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara Smith,
Recording Secretary