

Charlottesville First United Methodist Church

Church Council Meeting Minutes

July 24, 2023

Members Present: Lisa Hanrahan, Alex Joyner, Cindy Poots Remington, Paige Lindblom, Karen Lapps, Lisa Mann, Hu Shaffer, Brent Isaacs, Bob Braden, Bill Clarke, Gary Bibb, Fred Schneider, Ron Histan, Dana Palmer, Gary Jones, Larry Lambert, Jeff Taylor, Priscilla Sprague, Dave Wheatley, Frank McMullen, Jon Scheumann.

The meeting was called to order at 7:05PM by Chairwoman Lisa Hanrahan. The devotion and opening prayer were presented by Bill Clarke.

Finance Report: Jeff Taylor gave an abbreviated report to the full council since the Finance Committee had finished its full meeting immediately prior to the Council meeting. Our financial offerings are close to budget (a little below expected), but expenses are also below budget. Therefore, we are in good standing financially. Fred Schneider has taken on the new role of Assistant Financial Secretary, taking some of the load off Dana Palmer, Church Financial Secretary. Beryl Wilkes will continue to help as needed. Ron Histan is the new chair of the stewardship ministry.

New Business: Paige Lindblom has requested a one time amount of \$200 to be allocated for neurodiversity sensory aids. This was also discussed during the Finance meeting and determined that a vote was not needed since there are funds available in the Ministry budget. Lisa asked Paige to talk a little about neurodiversity sensory aids and how they can be used by individuals within the church. Sensory aids would include noise canceling (or diminishing) headphones, fidget toys and sensory seats. Some of the aids will be kept in the quiet room and will be available as needed during worship and some kept near the Sunday School rooms. Paige also talked about how we could be one of the only churches in the area to offer neurodiversity sensory aids and that we should highlight this in our publicity and on the website. From her research and experience she has learned that use of sensory aids is becoming a helpful and important tool in education. She even suggested that perhaps CFUMC could develop an accreditation criteria for other churches interested in using neurodiversity sensory aids within their programs, since nothing like this currently exists.

Trustees Report: Guy Moffatt reviewed the solar panel project status. Several issues have arisen that may preclude us going through the installation as planned. Dominion Power has significantly increased the cost of connecting solar panel output to the electrical grid. In addition, the cost of the purchase and installation has increased substantially over the past few months. Guy has written a letter to Dominion Power requesting information regarding the sudden increase in cost. Trustees are also talking with solar companies regarding any information they might have about churches and other nonprofit organizations getting assistance with the cost of implementing solar. The life expectancy of the panels is currently about 20 years, and our expected payoff would be about the same. The question arose as to the feasibility of going ahead at this time. The trustees will continue

to explore the possibility and report their findings. Dana reminded us that this purchase is supported by an individual in the church via a designated donation of \$100,000.00 that is already “in the bank.” She also noted the significant decrease in greenhouse gas emissions our conversion to solar would result in. Dave Wheatley suggested we consider “greening” the entire church: LED bulbs, motion sensors, etc. that will decrease electricity consumption.

Ministry Council: Cindy Remington reviewed the proposal from John Scheumann and Joey Clark for resuming PACEM hosting by CFUMC this winter was discussed. PACEM Support at CFUMC this year: Concerns centered on the overnight coverage for the men who are staying. Alex noted that women will not be served by PACEM in 23/24 at our church as it was this year. Do we need a “statement” that prohibits smoking, alcohol, and firearms on the premises? This is a written part of the PACEM rules, so no need. Members present felt it was important to allow guests to use the shower. Meals should not be a problem since individuals and groups volunteer to provide them. Bill Clarke moved, and Dana seconded a motion to continue to support PACEM this year. The motion carried unanimously. The times available for our church are limited because we are late signing on. The dates selected are March 2 to March 16. These dates will not interfere with the previously scheduled RISE against hunger and the plant sale. Alex reserved these dates on the PACEM calendar for 2024.

Cindy Remington requested that Outreach and Witness should be combined into one group. Alex noted that Social Justice needs to be a part of this same discussion. He suggested that we might look for an individual to assume the role as chair of a Social Justice/Witness Council Ministry. A lengthy discussion ensued, covering Witness, Social Justice, and Outreach. Outreach encompasses Witness, so it was felt that we didn’t need a separate Witness Ministry. Cindy made a motion to change the name of our Witness ministry to Social Justice Ministry. Bill Clarke seconded the motion, and the vote was passed unanimously.

Regarding the plant sale which was tentatively set for the end of March, Gary Bibb raised the concern about weather at that time of year and those buying plants having to hold them for a month or more before it is warm enough to plant outside. Cindy Remington, who is heading the plant sale will take another look at dates.

Pastor Alex: Upcoming events: VBS is next week. On August 13 our new bishop, Sue Hauptert-Johnson will be preaching. There are a number of presentations by the Charlottesville Clergy Collective commemorating the August 12, 2017 events in the city. There will be a forum at the Carver Rec Center from 2-5 pm by the authors of Standing Up to Hate.

Fred Schneider and Alex are working on a “final” service at the Hinton Avenue Church in September or October. We are looking forward to the Centennial Celebration of FUMC in the fall of 2024.

Alex has scheduled a screening of the documentary film Raised/Razed that looks at the things that happened to the Vinegar Hill Community. This will take place on Sunday, September 10 at 6:00 PM.

The next New Members class will be in September as several prospective members will be out of town in August.

We will continue our children's ministry internship through the school year with a UVA student. Lara Upton has been promoted to Youth Director in the wake of Dave Breslin's departure to a Liberty University professorship.

Jeff Taylor presented a new program we have entered in with New Beginnings Christian Community. They are running a foodbank and we will be delivering 50 dozen eggs purchased from Loaves and Fishes, once every 2 weeks. The funding will come from the Downtown Ministry fund, at least for the first year. The current cost for a dozen eggs from Loaves and Fishes is \$00.58. Frank moved to support this new ministry and Dave seconded. The motion carried.

Unless something comes up that needs Church Council approval, we will not meet in August.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:25 PM