

**Plymouth Church, ~~United Church of Christ Council~~
Congregational Council Meeting Minutes
February 10, 2018**

The meeting was called to order at 8:50 a.m. by moderator Lori Kaid. In attendance (need help with names): Lori Kaid, Katherine Guthrie, Jane Dunkel, Kyna Shilling, Bing Tso, Karen Clark, Rev. Kelle Brown, Elizabeth Gordon, Mike Pierson, Courtney Hashimoto, Debbie Baden. Absent: Madeline Beery, Rev. Steve Davis.

Lori invited all present to check in. New council members were welcomed: Karen Clark, Elizabeth Gordon, Mike Person, Courtney Hashimoto, and Debbie Baden.

Lori indicated that the annual Lay Leadership Retreat, which is normally held in February, has been shifted this year to March. This allows more time for planning this event, which will be held at Plymouth on Saturday, March 10, from 9 – 1:00. Breakfast/Lunch will be included.

Lori spoke about her leadership style, which she characterizes as being “servant and situational leadership”. Among the norms she asks council to observe this year are:

- Confidentiality, if dictated by the situation
- Represent the congregation
- Be transparent and open, avoid atmosphere of secrecy
- Publish meeting minutes quickly, send out to entire council first, then make available to congregation via Plymouth’s website
- Explore how to get information out to the congregation by multiple methods, including non-traditional ways

Rev. Brown gave the minister’s report, a written copy of which was distributed to all council members. Highlights include:

- Deacon’s ministry. Currently 10+ volunteers plus Kelle and Donene. Still in formative stage. This ministry is open to others
- Church website – improvement is needed. Question: can we use our own resources to improve vs. defaulting to bringing in outside experts. Need to focus on making our website more accessible to those on the outside (outward vs. inward focus)
- Staff-led church. Importance of developing a culture of trust and collaboration that allows staff to utilize their gifts
- Council should look ahead and ask what needs to be done to sustain Plymouth in the midst of ongoing and future cultural changes

Bing provided an update on the action plan, including the three initiatives identified.

1. Rebuilding a Strong Foundation: Objective is to provide for long-term financial sustainability.
2. Establish a Companion Faith Community
3. Create a Church within a Church to Revitalize Plymouth

Of these three initiatives, most progress to date has been made on number 1. The second and third initiatives have not yet been explored yet. Options to revitalize were touched upon, such as:

- Make Plymouth a learning center for the community; e.g., sponsor lecture series, theologian in residence
- Prison outreach to men's, women's, and juvenile detention facilities
- Provide opportunities for people downtown to mix, just as the Wednesday noon jazz series did for many years

Bing discussed potential ideas for the leadership retreat, including:

- Review of the action plan
- Reports by Rev. Brown and Davis on the strategic vision each has for Plymouth
- Identify goals and priorities for this year (short-term); the next 2-3 years (intermediate term); and the next 10-20 years (long-term).
- Focus conversation on what each person can do that is consistent with and supportive of our collective vision
- Get input from board chairs in advance of the retreat, including their committee goals for this year
- What is our "Big Story"?
- How can we create a sense of sacred space, not only in worship but in all church meetings and gatherings? e.g., recite covenant or sacred text, shared prayer

All council members (and members of Plymouth) are encouraged to attend an "Undoing Institutional Racism" workshop this year if they haven't already done so. 50% subsidy is available for those needing financial support.

Rev. Brown and Davis have received their call letters. Wanda Griffiths has been officially hired as Director of Music and Organist.

Council is responsible for the March 4 brunch. Kyna and Elizabeth agreed to help lead. Other council members are encouraged to volunteer (due to men's retreat Mar 2 – 4, several council members will not be available).

Jane provided a financial update. Plymouth ended 2017 with a year-end surplus. During 2018 there will be a one-time write off of \$52K of pledges for the sanctuary renovation which are deemed to be uncollectible.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00.

Respectfully submitted,
Courtney Hashimoto