

Plymouth Church United Church of Christ

Congregational Council

May Meeting Minutes

May 9, 2018

Attendance: Debbie Baden, Kelle Brown, Jennifer Castle (Staff), Karen Clark, Steve Davis (Minister), Elizabeth Gordon, Katherine Guthrie, Janet Gwilym (Immigration Ministry Team (IMT)), Betsy Hale (IMT), Jorge Espinal (IMT), Lorelie Kaid, Carol Mooney (IMT), Mike Pierson, Adele Reynolds (IMT), Warren Smith (IMT), Bing Tso

Welcome: Lori opened the meeting at 6:11pm. Council members and visitors did a check in and the agenda was reviewed.

- I. **Immigration Ministry Team Report** – The immigration ministry team provided an overview of what they have been doing and their vision for the future. Kelle Brown invited them to the Council meeting to share. Jorge shared his experience as an immigrant (from Honduras) in the country, his struggles and success (currently at South Seattle Community College), including what the immigration support has meant to him and other individuals in his circumstance.

While the team provided a budget, Janet noted, the focus of the presentation was not the budget. The budget is part of their vision. The key ask today was support from the Council and to have the team connected more directly with Council; making the effort of this team more of a priority. They seek the blessing of the Council as well as a stronger interconnectivity, so that immigration ministry becomes a core part of Plymouth. Their presence on the recent Plymouth ecosystem diagram has them furthest away from the Council. The Council asked the team to think about providing a roadmap for the journey towards becoming deeply integrated with church life.

One of the key recommendations is to enable Plymouth Staff and members of the congregation to attend training.

Note: The prior night the team did attend the CSSA meeting. Unfortunately, the team felt the focus was on the budget and not what they were looking to accomplish. They were not there to seek money.

The excitement around the team led the Council to discuss in depth larger themes around culture ~~change, and~~ change and embracing new ideas without bogging down in process. Council was provided team materials and will discuss at the next council meeting regarding next steps and possible motion at the next Council Meeting on June 9.

- II. **Minister's Report:** Review of Kelle's report brought further discussion about the structure of Sunday services, and how to decide whether or not to move to one Sunday morning service. While Kelle asked in her report for the topic to be tabled, Council focused on additional discussion based on the new information from Kelle. She was not present at the

April meeting when this was first discussed and with the new information and clarification, many voiced that the topic deserved additional input and discussion—particularly hearing the heavy toll it takes on staff to have two services. Council guided discussion around encouraging looking at what new worship opportunities there can be, instead of what worship opportunities we will lose. From Friday night movie/worship nights to other potential new offerings, there will be many opportunities for people to worship, and importantly, to reach new people. Council agreed to discuss further at the next meeting, and if we decide to move in this direction, how best to present it to the congregation at the next congregational conversation and over the summer for a fall rollout.

This important dialogue led us to move up the topic of leadership and culture change. Jennifer Castle discussed a book she is currently reading as part of her Faith Formation Certification. The book is titled, *Canoeing the Mountains*. The premise of the book is focused on the example of Lewis and Clark and how they rode canoes to the Continental Divide in search of the Northwest Passage, and expected to be able to ride a canoe easy to the Pacific. But when they reached the top, the terrain was very different and the canoe would no longer work. As a congregation, Plymouth continues to try to do the same things we have always done, including when we don't like what someone is doing, we get a new minister. This is not fair and we need to look at ourselves. We need to change otherwise it will continue to be the same old, same old. Much evidence exists of how Plymouth is focused on maintaining, rather than focusing on its mission and the opportunities the mission offers.

This book will be required reading as part of the August retreat for the leaders attending this overnight. The plan will be to invite all of council and at a minimum, the chairs of our boards. Steve is working on this invitation but is trying to find a location.

III. Financial Report: Council did not have time to review this report; it will be emailed by Steve or Jane.

IV. Board & Committee Liaisons: At present we have the following liaisons and two committees need liaisons from council:

- a. **Community & Care**- Elizabeth Gordon is the Board Liaison
- b. **Social Investment** – Madeline is the Board Liaison
- c. **CSSA** – Kelle is the staff liaison. We need a Council rep.
- d. **Finance and Social Investment**– Madeline; Steve is the staff liaison
- e. **Budget & Stewardship** – Kyna is the Council liaison
- f. **Nominating** -- Katherine is the Council liaison, although it is not under the Council.
- g. **Faith Formation** – Jennifer Castle is staff liaison; need representative from Council
<Karen Clark volunteered for this after the Meeting>

[post meeting note: Karen and Bing agreed to be Faith Formation and Immigration Ministry Team liaisons, respectively.]

V. Meeting ended in closing prayer from Steve at 8:15pm