

Plymouth Church, United Church of Christ
1217 6th Ave
Seattle WA 98101
www.plymouthchurchseattle.org

CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL Meeting Minutes
Meeting Date: December 9, 2017

ATTENDANCE:

Al Wallace
 Lori Kaid
 Dan Landes
 Bing Tso
 Doug James
 Margot Page

Kathleen Wilson
 Kyna Shilling
 Madeline Beery
 Paul Ford
 Jane Dunkel
 Katherine Guthrie

Staff:
Rev. Steve Davis
Rev. Kelle Brown

 Guests:
Deborah Baden
(incoming
councilmember)

AGENDA ITEMS:

Al Wallace called the meeting to order at 9: 44 am.

1) Minister's Report

- a) Kelle and Steve each provided written reports in advance. Council agreed these reports should be made available to the Council/public via attachments to the minutes for this meeting, and subsequent Council meetings as well.
- b) Bruce Chow-Reyes with the Center for Progressive Renewal will be coming to visit us. He is very impressive, say those who know him, and can provide excellent consulting and coaching. Al and Lori have discussed professional coaching (and associated budget) for our ministers, and this could be a good resource.
- c) Council attendance at the staff holiday party at Steve's condo complex at lunchtime on 12/19 would be appreciated, for those who can make it. We discussed arrangements for possible cards and gifts. Acknowledging staff throughout the year is a good thing for Council to remember as well.
- d) Steve provided a facilities security update. Staff has been gathering resources from other churches and the UCC to set up planning around procedures and drills. They have also talked to several security companies about prices for camera systems (difficult given church architecture, and poor wi-fi access). Staff has purchased two-way radios for themselves to improve communication. Once appropriate plans are firmed up, these will be shared with staff and the congregation in the near future. We don't want to overplay the danger of active shooters, but it

would be good to remind folks of general disaster plans (such as for earthquakes). There is a lot of fear, so we need to message and plan for this well, and get the word out to the congregation at large (with an adult forum in January, for starters). We would like Janice to take lead in communicating this in multiple ways. Council also had a larger conversation around “gatekeeping,” website content editing, church cultural issues, and the role of Council leadership (all important issues to be addressed in the 2018 leadership conversations).

2) Financial Update

a) 2017 YTD Review

- i) Dan reported that we expect a small deficit in 2017. Much depends on how end of year pledges come in. Al and others will step up messaging, both now and regularly in the future, especially to folks who give but have not previously pledged.

b) 2018 Budget Update & Vote

- i) Lori led an extended conversation around this. Some key points are as follows:
 - (1) Through some major efforts, the budget committee had whittled the funding gap between revenues and expenses down to \$68K. Through some additional ideas for revenue and general belt-tightening, the Council heard that it will be possible to provide a credible balanced budget for approval next month.
 - (2) The budget committee laid out the concept of a new initiatives task force to address possible security upgrades, bookstore conversion, web/IT, alternative worship, and volunteer ministries. With Council and ministerial oversight and approval, this task force would determine how to further fund and prioritize these initiatives. It will be key to ensure that these new initiatives are consistent with church priorities and budget expectations. It will also be important to identify activities that Plymouth should cease or reduce doing, given the smaller congregation, so that it can focus on activities most critical to its mission. To that end, the Action Plan needs to be revisited and readjusted to the current situation and needs.
- ii) Budget committee folks will provide general info to congregation about the budget for the scheduled meeting after the 11 am service tomorrow. They will provide some specifics in a one-page summary (draft version) to aid discussion.
- iii) We are trying to change the culture around budget discussion, so that leadership and the congregation don't get lost arguing about in details.
- iv) Council will meet at 10am 12/17 to approve the budget. We will see a budget beforehand.

3) Council Update

a) Bylaw Amendment

- i) Al circulated a redlined version of the by-laws, specifically Section 10.5 pertaining to the Music Director. The initial suggested language struck language about a mandatory search committee for that position, as well as a reference in Section 10.8 regarding interim appointments. After some discussion, the motion was withdrawn and replaced with a new motion to strike all 10.5 and 10.8 mentions. Council discussed pros and cons of striking all language vs. a partial modification. The new motion read, for Section 10.5: “The Music Director shall be hired by and subject to dismissal by the supervising Minister. “ (without the clause “with the concurrence of the Council.”) It also strikes the mention of Music Director

in the Interim Appointments paragraph in Section 10.8. [The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.](#)

b) Call Letter Update

i) Al reported that the ad hoc committee is finishing this up.

c) Nominating Committee Update

i) Katherine reported that Debbie Baden and Courtney Hashimoto have been nominated to council. Dan, Al, Kathleen, Doug, Margot, and Paul will all being replaced by new members. Madeline agreed to be secretary next year.

4) Al adjourned the meeting at 12:18 pm.

Minutes submitted by Bing Tso, Council Secretary, to Council by email for review and approval on December 13, 2017. Approved by Council via e-mail with minor editorial revisions on December 13, 2017.

ATTACHMENTS

Lead Pastor Report

December 9, 2017

To Plymouth Council,

May the God who illumines bless you abundantly! This is a challenging time for the world, for our nation and most certainly for this church. Through deaths, hospital visits, pastoral care and counseling; through joyful announcements and embracing the season of Advent with courage and hope, together we are Plymouth, moving into another year of covenant promise. Thank you for supporting ministry, and for your spiritual discernment and wisdom as we press forward toward the vision of inclusion, wholeness, and loving connection that is being realized in our work together.

Below are my points for discussion:

Deacons Ministry:

The Deacons are continuing training. Last Saturday, December 2, deacons met to share their personal faith journeys and to build rapport. This past Sunday was their first act together, serving communion. It was a beautiful expression of inclusion and shared leadership.

Professional Coaching: Steve and I are in conversation with the Center for Progressive Renewal as to next steps and how we might maintain relationship as well as fulfill services for which Plymouth has already paid. To their credit, CPR has recently hired the Rev. Bruce Reyes-Chow as the Interim Director of Coaching. He is a former Moderator for the Presbyterian Church USA, a public speaker, and writer. I am familiar with his work and believe he will be an incredible resource for Plymouth.

Worship: To recap, the worship arts team has begun installing an Advent/Christmas/Epiphany liturgical art piece in the sanctuary. The install will be completed on December 9th as we meet. Worship will be at 10 a.m. on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve. Evening worship on Christmas Eve will be at 5 p.m., with music beginning at 4:40 p.m., and 9 p.m. with music beginning at 8:30 p.m. Also, I have been invited to preach at First AME Church for the "Watch Night" service at 7 p.m. "Alternative" worship to attract millennials and beyond will begin in 2018 with the first on Friday, January 26th at 5 p.m. The next will be Saturday, February 24th at 5 p.m.

Faith Formation: Jennifer Castle and I have been in conversation to create more Bible Study opportunities for the church. We are sorely in need to find ways that offer consistent study to enhance discipleship and weekly invitations for the community to attend. Look for an announcement in January.

Upcoming Events: We are expecting Dr. William Barber in the spring. Dr. Robyn Henderson-Espinoza, has accepted an invitation to teach and preach here at Plymouth on Queer Theology and Protest in January or February. Look forward also to Rev. Courtney Stang-Tregear preaching in January, and the Rev. Dr. Carey Anderson preaching in February. I'll be attending a West Coast minister's retreat the week of January 28th.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Kelle Brown

Report of the Executive Minister for December 9 Council Meeting

While November and December are months of thankfulness and hopeful anticipation, they are also filled with countless hours of meetings, wrestling with tough circumstances, discerning matters of finance and faith, and being challenged to stretch ourselves into the realm of that which can only happen in and through us when God leads the way. I'm grateful to be in a place that calls for much of me and offers me the unwavering hope of the community of faith.

1. 2018 Budget, Council and Congregational Meetings – Our work the past few weeks has been full, right up to the very last hours to share the dreams and hopes of staff and congregation around the resources of ministry. As of Thursday, we have heard from 166 giving households for a total of just under \$560,000 in pledges for 2018. Our hope is to reach \$734,000, however, with two recent deaths and some who have reduced their annual support, we may fall short of that goal. Calls will be made to the remaining 35 known giving households, as well as an additional mailing, Herald articles and bulletin items to invite additional pledges for 2018 and year end gifts for 2017. I'm grateful for the tremendous work of our Budget Committee and the leadership of Lori Kaid and others who have struggled to help us be both responsible and faithful.

2. We will have a final proposal to recommend on **Sunday, December 10** following the 11 a.m. service to have further conversation with the congregation regarding the proposed budget. Copies of the proposed budget will be ready for distribution by **Sunday, December 24 and 31** in order meet

publication and bylaw requirements for announcing and presenting the budget for vote of the congregation on **Sunday, January 7**, following the late worship service in the sanctuary.

3. Visual / Audio Improvements in the Sanctuary – Ongoing researching of pricing and installation.

4. Facility Security – I have been securing bids as part of the new initiative project for surveillance cameras for the building. I have also purchased 6 two-way radios with earpieces for various staff and volunteers to have to be in communication during the activities of Sunday morning should immediate assistance be needed. They will arrive this week and be paid for through our designated funds.

5. Christmas Party for Staff – How will the Council take part in sharing appreciation for our dedicated staff?

Through all the challenges of holiday activities, we remain a community of faith like none other. I'm honored to share in leadership.

Yours in grace and hope, Rev. Steve Davis