

Executive Committee Meeting Notes

March 17, 2009

Attendees: Kevern Joyce, Will Sencabaugh, Jeff Stone, Phil Guymont, Margaret Forbush, Sonja White, Daphne Siegel, Deb Durland, Laurie O'Neill, Lee Murray

Kevern stated that for the Congregational Meeting, the financial situation will be covered with presentations from Jim Forbush, Phil Guymont and Kevern focusing on the positive, highlighting changes that save money. It will be an informational meeting.

During the next few months we may have to make some changes and when you talk about changes that save money, you talk about people. We made some decisions that increased spending. The music committee proposed a 25% increase for the music director and we said, yes and why not for the rest of the staff. Except, not a lot of people stepped forward to increase their giving to compensate for that. From that point income and expenses started to be further apart and we started pulling money out of the investment fund. The message is that it is early in Will's ministry and we have faith that it will work through. This church has been here for 200 years. But if things still don't work out, we will have to do some things.

Phil stated that eighty-nine percent of the budget is salaries and building expense which only leaves 11% to economize with. Some suggestions are: to ask people to pick up material normally mailed; ask Linda to look at all our mail expenses; ask staff how they plan to spend and to do what they can to spend less -- reduce as much as possible; take a look at our UCC charge which is \$8,000 for 440 people -- and by basing our count on currently active and those who support the church, we should be able to reduce that amount. Other suggestions are to use some outreach funds for church programs currently paid out of operations. One thing is Youth Fellowship because there are a lot of kids in the program who are not church members. If we look hard enough there are probably a few other things we support that could be broadly defined as outreach. When asked how much -- the reply was possibly up to \$5,000. There was a lot of discussion about this and transferring funds from other places if that would help. Margaret spoke for Outreach and said that it is more about how they use the money than how much there is; they feel they are stewards of the church's money and look to the congregation for direction. Another cost saving would be to eliminate the Poland Springs cooler which costs \$80 per month. Questions about the water fountain were asked -- and it was said that there was a plumbing problem that was deemed too expensive to fix. New thermostats were installed in several places including the sanctuary that can be set for 7 days. It costs \$2,000 a month to heat the building. Some insulation had been added to the church, but maybe some over the nursery wing would help. There have been some things done over the past few years -- insulation, new windows, patching the hole in the chimney, different ballast in lights and a few other things that have probably cut our heating costs.

We have time to work on this, but if over the next 18 months, costs keep rising, the investment fund keeps going down, and given the economic background, it is unrealistic to think that giving will increase. We will have some growth. Will said there are at least a dozen new members joining the church.

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Jim will talk about stewardship and we will emphasize planned giving and building back the other side of the investment program, because other than the original gifts in the late 1980's there has probably been about \$50,000 given to the church but not much else. The Stetson fund supports 5 groups who equally share. Accumulated gains that weren't spent and some of the proceeds from the Stetson fund have gone into the general endowment. So although we have used some funds and the total market value is down, we have not used the principle amounts that have been given to the church yet.

Trustees: Phil reported that the Nursery School Committee has met and recommends having an afternoon program. There was sufficient interest from the 3-day program; not sure about the 2-day. They will be talking to parents and advertising. Permission was asked of the Trustees to offer it and it was Ok'd. Monday, Wednesday and Friday will have the afternoon program and will utilize the existing staff. There will be a meeting with the state regarding certification. The program is being advertised. There are a maximum of 10 slots with the break-even point being 5 or 6. There was an ad in the Standard Times – right in the middle. It was suggested that maybe the Trustees are not the best committee to oversee the nursery school.

Kevern talked about the **Reorganization Committee** which met twice and will meet again Thursday night. One of the questions is what to do with the Nursery School and where should it report. Should it report through the trustees or should it go through religious education? One of the things discussed is that the Executive Committee would change and become the Church Council and the moderator would change and although there is no name it would be leader and co-leader so that would be a 2 year position and the co-leader would move into the slot – so there is always someone in training. The Church council would be composed of heads of committees, but there will be 2 at large members elected by the congregation. All the committees will have a different name but they will not exist in their current form. The only 2 whose names will resemble their current are Outreach and Religious Education although their names will be different. There is an undefined section which is where the nursery school will go. If someone has an idea it can be brought to the Church Council. What do you do with the men's group in the reorganization? Kevern will send out a copy of the power point presentation before the meeting so everyone gets a chance to see it before the quarterly meeting.

These ideas will be presented at the March meeting along with an update on where we are financially. It won't be finalized, but we will put it out there to talk about. It was questioned about transitioning between the old and new. The reply was that it is still being worked on. Kevern said he liked the idea of having a Committee Day.

He reminded all that the annual meeting will be May 3rd and that annual reports are due April 1 so they can be distributed by April 19th. Will's installation is now planned for May 31st.

Religious Education: Laurie reported that 47 participated in the aquarium trip. It was a great experience. Dr Lemlin, who is a vet, came to Sunday School. He talked to the kids about domestic animals and the kids brought their pets. Talked about how to take care of them, be good owners, why environmentally spaying and neutering is important to our world. They are planning a mission to visit a nursing home – the kids with their animals.

- Sleeping bags project – they have completed 3 sleeping bags. All materials have been donated by families. So Sr. Rose at Market Ministries will be getting them.
- Greenhouse work will resume on Sunday. Pre K through 2nd grade have begun their seedlings which Fred Dabney has donated including the pots. And Jim McBratney is donating the sheeting cover for the greenhouse. All DeMello and Mike Goveia are donating their time to the project.

- The Jane Goodall Institute has selected our Sunday School to be featured in their spring magazine because of all the mission work we have accomplished. It is called the roots & shoots group which is dedicated to helping people, animals and the environment and we have met all the criteria since September. Maybe people can go to the website and check it out. It was stated that there were about 80 kids registered in the Sunday School.

Junior fellowship: Daphne reminded us of the Pasta Supper coming up in 2 weeks. We took reservations this past Sunday and hope to take more this Sunday. We are hoping that not just fellowship families, but church families will come. Actually the parents will cook and the kids help with prep work, set up and serving. It is the only fundraiser we have all year—some of the food is donated. Henry Wainer always donates the salad fixings because his kids all came to the fellowship here. At the beginning of April a surprise meeting is planned. The kids don't know what is planned. That same day as the pasta dinner, **the Senior Fellowship** has bowling at 3 and come back in time for the pasta dinner. They worked at the New Bedford Half Marathon this past Sunday. They worked at the finish line taking off the ankle bracelets that the runners wore and they had a good time.

Will said that the Confirmation class has 6 participants and it is a good group.

Guild: Sonja said that the Rummage Sale will be May 1st from 8-3. The signs are all set. Linda Paradise and Alise Gale are going to chair the rummage sale again. We have some large items from a home in Hidden Bay that have to be moved before next Monday. We need a truck and some strong backs. Will volunteered his garage to store things. Anyone who can lend a hand for about an hour on Saturday say from 10-11 to get these things moved.

The Guild is hoping to put together a Spring Banquet. The kick off for the Relay for Life is on April 24th. Fays Restaurant is allowing us to do a fundraiser on Sunday the 19th. They are going to give us 20% of the food.

Ways & Means: Deb reported that the Lee's Dinner went well. The Grange was a good size; she also mentioned that a lot of people stayed after the meal talking. Will did all the dishes and he is our hero. Fifty-four meals were served and the bring-your-own-beverage worked well. It was estimated that the profit was in the \$1400 range.

The next event will be the kite making & flying on April 5th. We plan to make the kites and fly them on the same day. We will have kits for kites, but people are welcome to bring their own to fly. There is no rain date.

Then in May will be the Padanaram Garden Market on the 16th. We are looking for donations for the bake table, silent auction, and will soon have a volunteer sign up sheets available. It takes a lot of hands to put on this event. Fred Dabney will donate some plants. Members can also donate plants from their gardens, but they should be potted at least 2 weeks in advance. It will be the same day as the Buzzards Bay Garden Club plant sale.

The committee has been talking about a chicken dinner possibly mid September on a Saturday.

Outreach: Margaret said that it was confirmed that the Blood Drive will be on June 7th from 7:30 a.m. until 2:30p.m. There are plans to get the word out and do some publicity.

Another project that we are thinking about working on for next year is Gifts to Give – would like the whole congregation to get involved possibly a focus for the year. This is an organization to which we can say we have some people who like to this and some that like to do that. They also have supplies from arts and crafts to clothing where social workers can come and

get what their clients may need. A number of committee members are going to work there to check it out to see if it might be a good thing for next year.

Barbara Purdy who runs Forbidden Fruit Farms has the community supported agriculture (CSA) where you buy a share and get fruits and vegetables, eggs, chicken, locally grown beef and lamb if you want. Last Friday she had an informational meeting. We are planning to have her come and speak after church. What they have volunteered to do is: if people sign up (saying I am a friend of or member of the congregational church) for every 10 who memberships purchased, they will give us one free that we can use for families and/or the women's shelter. The program lasts for 36 weeks.

One Great Hour of Sharing.

Deacons: Jeff mentioned that the Deacons had a pilot group to run worship and they have taken on Holy Week. Things are moving along. On Maundy Thursday, RE will do Stations of the Cross at 6, followed by the Maundy Thursday service at 7. They hope this will help increase the attendance at the service. During Holy Week, Will said that members of the worship team will come early each morning and do something very informal each morning. The church will be open each day; there is no set program and coffee is included.

The Bibles and racks are in and dedicated.

They are going to be reintroducing "My father's God to Thee" on just the 1st Sunday of each month. There was a Baptism last Sunday and another this coming Sunday. On April 19th will be new member Sunday.

Will said that there is going to be a mission trip as long as the church approves it. He will announce it on Easter Sunday. Right now there are 10 on a subcommittee talking a bout it and all showed up. Wendy, Daphne, Will they are planning to go to Pipestem, WVA.

Gordon Lindsey was going to make an anonymous donation toward the bible fund. Then Will said that he thought that we could all support it and that is what happened. Will asked if he could put that money into a Pastor's discretionary fund and that if there was anything that came along that Gordon was interested in we'd be happy to invest it in that way. He was ok with that. It will be used for little things that come along; things that he doesn't want to take out of the church budget. One of those is in the Bride's Room and now there is a 22 flat screen color TV hanging on the wall. It will be hooked up for sound.

Will said that he took the challenge made by the Trustees on ways to save money. He talked to staff about ways to save a little bit of money here and there. During the month of July he would like to coordinate our worship with Smith Mills Church. The first 2 weeks of July Rev. Robinson will be at our church and the last 2 weeks Will will be at the Smith Mills Church. (Our church will be closed those last 2 weeks.) That way neither church will be paying for a supply minister or organist. The plan received a yes vote and was thought a good idea. In regard to offerings, church envelopes will go to the respective churches and loose offerings will stay at each church that collects it.

This weekend there is a play at the Smith Mills church.

The meeting was adjourned.

Lee Murray, Clerk

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