

Church Council Meeting Minutes Tuesday, September 15, 2009

Present: Phil Guymont, Paul Durland, Deb Durland, Kathy Pappas, Reverend Will, Karen McArthur, Dick Purdy, Jane Rioux, Margaret Forbush, Jim Forbush, Jenny Lynch, David Fentress, Linda Gouveia, Rich Rende, Cecelia Roberts

Meeting opened with a prayer by Paul Durland. Margaret will give the opening prayer for the October meeting and Jane in November.

There will be 2 meetings next month due to budget discussions that need to be finalized by the October quarterly meeting. The first meeting is Tuesday, September 29th at 7:00 pm and then Tuesday, October 20th at 7:00 pm. All are asked to attend.

Treasurer's Report

Phil shared that there are ongoing discussions about the budget as we get closer to the quarterly meeting where a budget for 2010 will be presented to the congregation. He has been asked by church members if the Church Council has the "guts" to make the hard decisions to make budget cuts if necessary. Phil also mentioned that the Investment Committee is reviewing alternate financial "experts" to help rebuild the dwindling funds in the endowment.

Worship Ministry

Linda shared information with the group about offering free trade coffee at coffee hour on Sundays. The UCC has a program which offers free trade coffee for sale and can act as a fund raiser for the church. Jenny and David offered that although this coffee is tasty, it does come at a higher price. Linda will research the alternatives and share additional info.

- At our meeting on August 17 we considered the option of writing down any joys or concerns to be included in the part of the service when we offer up our prayers. Cards would be made available to people as they come into the church, on which they could write their joys/concerns and then be placed in a basket on the pulpit. Discussion ensued about the when and how to do this. We will continue discussion at our next meeting with the idea of starting this in October.
- We talked at length about our "mission". I read an excerpt from Marcus Borg's *The Heart of Christianity* on "thin places" and suggested we think about how we can make worship and the experience in the sanctuary a "thin place". We talked about working toward greater participation by lay folk whereby lay folk might feel that they "own" the service or might "find the sermon within"; feel closer to God and Jesus, provide and participate in a service that is looked forward to "with a happy heart"; time to be with one another; to share one's story; to take care of one another; that these experiences might be had both within the sanctuary and beyond.
- The provisional mission statement for the Worship Ministry that evolved out of our discussions is:

“To create, provide and engage our congregation in “awesome” services and opportunities, helping them to live their beliefs.”

- Deciding we would read *The Heart of Christianity* as it could be helpful in our lives as Christians and in our work on the Worship Ministry, copies were ordered and made available yesterday with a reading assignment due before our next meeting.
- We agreed to begin talking about the music program at our next meeting and I have asked that we read an article about music ministry in the UCC News to help get us thinking about music and ministry.
- I would like to ask that the ministries read through the list of Sanctuary Responsibilities and that we complete all the tasks each Sunday, especially making sure the church is locked up.
- I would like us to consider supporting the UCC Coffee Project. By purchasing “fairly traded coffee, tea and chocolate through the UCC Coffee Project,[we would be joining] a growing network of 40 small farmer co-operatives in 20 countries, including the US, receiving fair prices, affordable credit, and a long-term, direct trade relationship through a 100% Fair Trade, worker-owned cooperative, Equal Exchange.” There are fundraising and educational opportunities available at www.equalexchange.coop/ucc . We could serve fair trade coffee and tea at coffee hour and possibly sell their coffee, tea, and chocolate for home use during coffee hours as well as at other functions.

Outreach Ministry

Margaret shared the information from their meeting of September 8th. Additional discussion ensued regarding the “bottom line” for Outreach. **In the end, a motion was made which was unanimously approved by the Council that accepted scenario 2 which gives Outreach funding from pledges and loose collection with a 15% budget off of that base.**

The Outreach meeting of Sept. 8 was focused on information sharing and preliminary planning. The group is meeting this week for a social/brainstorming session to kick off the upcoming program year.

We discussed several changes the committee is experiencing this year:

- Our budget is now part of a Unified Pledge system
- We have been asked to take a leadership role in our church's relationship to the UCC; some budget items have now been transferred to Outreach, and we have been asked take a more active role in communicating opportunities to take advantage of UCC support and resources.
- We have been asked to create a budget for special offerings, and communicate goals to the congregation. We will need to examine ways to communicate to the congregation sensitively in the midst of all the other fundraising that will be occurring this year.

Caregiving Ministry

Council Meeting

September 15, 2009

Lay Shepherd Team

The Lay Shepherds have made many visits this summer. If anyone would like to have visits, we encourage them to speak with Rev. Will or Jane Rioux. We are saddened by the loss of Marge Lauerman this summer.

Beginning in September, all those 80 years old and older will receive a birthday card. Linda Keith designed a card using four pictures of the sanctuary. We thank Linda for her time and talent.

Prayer Shawl Ministry

The knitters met each month this summer. On October 18, Rev. Will will bless the shawls during the morning service.

Membership Team

The Membership Team met on September 8. The group is trying to reach out to all age groups. In an effort to do this, they contacted all the new members about Rally Day on the 13th. They are also working with Daphne Siegal for a date of December 20 to get the seniors and the new college freshmen together. They are also in the process of getting the e-mail addresses of the college freshmen to send them fall and Christmas greetings.

The team also discussed being present for new member meetings in order to get to know them.

They will meet next month on October 13.

A special thanks to all the volunteers from this ministry who helped to set up for Rally Day. The response was wonderful.

Fellowship Ministry

Deb reported that approximately 35 – 40 tickets have been sold to the chicken BBQ. All proceeds benefit the Mission Trip. Cecelia will send out an email to all kids and parents sharing this event information hoping to drum up more support. October 23rd is the Halloween Campfire and Storyteller event to be held at the “Y” again this year – rain or shine. Looking to create a dining event called “Dining Around” where people sign up for a pot luck dinner but don’t know who they will be eating with. A host family will be identified. This is just another way to get people who don’t know each other to get better acquainted.

Buildings and Grounds Ministry

Dick reported on the activities of his committee over the summer.

Shrubs were sprayed in the side garden; the birch trees were inoculated against boring beetles and pruned as was the tree by the side door (the one the kids climb in). We replaced the motor, thanks to Jim Ricci, in the steeple clock (front) and are now in the process adjusting the hands. District 1 Fire Dept. has been very kind and brought up the Tower Truck to help with the clock work which I hope will be finished Wednesday. Spraying for ants in the kitchen area has been done (twice). The elevator oil pipe has been fixed and we are waiting for the fire alarm people to come and get to work. Trouble with the phone lines was repaired. The rotten stump by the sand box was removed. We got a new buffer for Al and a new stove for the Parsonage. Larry Bedell kindly painted the front steps and the committee is planning to paint the Nursery School’s storage shed on the 19th. We still have the wheel chair ramp to

paint and some rot in a column to take care of - just a routine summer at the Congregational Church of South Dartmouth.

Finance Ministry

Karen reported on the Finance Committee's activities as well as the stewardship approach. Pledge units have contracted over the past year while expenses have increased. A great deal of passionate discussion continued as council members shared their thoughts and ideas. Reverend Will expressed his faith that all will work out and the congregation will come through. He expressed a positive attitude towards the stewardship process. The Council felt it was important to continue to educate the congregation on the daily costs to run the church. The idea of additional commitment to sharing time and talents to compensate for members who may not be able to offer a greater pledge amount was discussed and will be reviewed how to share this idea. The Council agreed that a process needs to be developed to review the proposed budget to reflect a realistic bottom line for next year. Jenny proposed looking at what can be trimmed and proposed income.

Ministry of Spiritual Formation

Rich reported on the previous meeting of Spirit Formation.

Update Sept 15, 2009

SUNDAY SCHOOL: So far we have 60 registered students ... we have about 20 more "active" kids from pre-high school that we are expecting to see. The year's theme was very well received by the kids. They are looking forward to the up and coming events and excited about announced projects.

SENIOR YOUTH FELLOWSHIP: The first meeting will be this Sunday, Sept. 20th from 7:00 – 8:30.

CRIB ROOM - we will be staffing it with volunteers - both from the high school youth and church members. There will be a sign up sheet on the crib room door.

JUNIOR YOUTH FELLOWSHIP: Meetings will begin September 27th when we will elect officers and outline the schedule of events for the year.

Meeting ended at 9:30 closing with a prayer by Reverend Will.

Respectfully submitted,

Cecelia Roberts

Clerk