

Meetinghouse Council Minutes

February 21, 2023

7 p.m.

Attendees: Steven Anderson, Jason Phillips, Paige Didora, Kent Nack, Deborah Eckland, Jeff Lindsay, Tim Anderson, Shelby Wagner, and Mary Fisher, Sara WG, Rick Groomes

Due to extreme weather, the meeting was held via Zoom

7:04 Opened with Prayer of Relational Intent and Devotions - Steve

7:08 January Minutes Approved

7:08 Guelich Budget Approval - Steve

- Previously approved deposit of up to \$2,000
- Now need total not to exceed \$20,000 (includes the \$2,000)
- **Motion to approve up to \$20,000 for upcoming Guelich lectures -- Motion Passes**
- Call for volunteers for Saturday meal service

7:14 Treasurer's Report - Jason

- Last Town Hall meeting - some degree behind giving budget but slightly ahead of last year
- In January - lost a bit of ground from 92% to 90%, still slightly ahead of last year
- Expenses remain meaningfully below budget, meaning that we are right at zero from a net perspective
 - 75% of spending categories are under budget

7:19 Budget and March 26 Town Hall - Jason/All

- Kris and HR are looking closely at the budget and considering what kind of HR budget they would like to see
- Ultimately the budget will come to Council, but finance would like some non-binding guidelines as they figure out what to do
 - Example - not drawing any more from the Foundation than we did last year
 - Could offer different possibilities
- We will need to make up for the gap that is created by the fact that we won't have PPP money this year
- Consideration of what the upcoming year will look like - less disruption from the pandemic and growing membership
- **Related: Stewardship Campaign - right at \$1M pledged - Deborah**
 - 430 giving units, but unclear if that's couples or individuals - 178 pledges came in
 - Email will be circulated with some data
 - Average pledge was \$5,187 per year
 - Minimum pledge was \$120 (\$10/mo), max \$72,000
 - Any way to know if there was growth? As of now, there were 16 never-before new givers

- Would want to know what the average gift is without the outliers
- It would be great to ask for less from the Foundation, but asking for no more may be more realistic
 - Knowing that we will not have PPP money will create a gap/goal for us
 - If the goal is not to ask for more, we need to find \$175k
- If we do need more money and we aren't going to take it to the Foundation, what are the other options?
- It's hard to come up with cuts of significance without reducing payroll
- March 26 is when we present a budget in process - opportunity to see what the feedback is
- Seems like people generally want to reduce the deficit; concern about what the longevity is if giving continues at this level
- **Related - Building Use Ideas - Kent**
 - Possible that we will see more income from businesses that could use the building
 - Met with Edina Economic Development person - Some hesitancy about using a church as a public meeting space
 - There may be some upfront costs - i.e., putting in an elevator - to have a long-term tenant.
 - Results would not be immediate
 - Edina after-school program was looking for a space. Nicole Smalley is looking into that - has also come up in some of the neighborhood listening work
 - Schedule, gym, staffing are ideal
 - Would also incorporate our goal of reaching more children and families
 - Have to keep the commitment of a long-term lease in mind
- 47 Employees currently
- Other churches are having the same issues - declining number of congregants and giving. What is the appropriate staffing level for our current congregation?
- Alternatively, we could balance the budget with Foundation funds and present the message that we will not be increasing the draw again
- Steve will ask Kris Henderson and the Finance Committee to prepare a draft budget that does not increase the draw on the Foundation

8:05 March 25 Town Hall Meeting

- The day prior to the Town Hall will be a congregational meeting about vision, March 25
 - Lots of people are asking what our "vision" is
 - On the other hand, some people feel this has been discussed, so maybe it can be discussed in a different way
 - Historically we have said, "To grow in Christ and serve the world" - but this discussion will be who we want to be in the next 3-5 years
- Visioning will be inclusive of all ministries
- Some of it may be a reminder of what is going on, what we are doing, what is going well
- Everything we are working towards is happening now, the path ahead is positive

8:22 Ministers' Report

- Decided to do the Ash Wednesday service online - virtual only, recorded
- Building will be closed on Thursday
- The documents have been moved into the the Library from the North Commons
 - Cheryl and the task force will be managing other documents in the library
- Kent - Task Force
- Visioning meeting - information will be prepared beforehand to illustrate what we are doing
 - Create the story for what we are doing and what we will be doing
- Christian sends his gratitude for support of his book and programming
- Wednesday night participation has been very low and even lower in the new year
- Service names - 9:30 AM traditional service. Second service is not "contemporary" so we went with "alternative" - looking to bring forward some names to those that attend that service
- Consideration of how we continue our mission of *one church, two expressions*
- Ways to do the offering time in the services more intentionally
- Cards on the table in both services in order to create more connection
- Wendy is now the head usher and is organizing the traditional service ushering team
- Just finished up the series on the minor prophets
- Lent series theme is Just Jesus
- Continue to use the same scripture in both the Traditional and Alternative - ministers are going back and forth. Varies how much the sermons change from service/expression to the other service/expression
 - How they are different - in the Traditional Service, presume more familiarity and comfort with Christian language. In the Alternative service - being intentional towards spiritual refugee - skeptics, people who may have left the church, terminology that may not be as resonant
 - Even though it may not be the majority of those in the Alternative service, we want to make sure that the targeted audience is reached.
 - In the Traditional service, tailor the approach to those more comfortable with church

8:53 Motion to Adjourn