

## **Council Meeting Minutes - March 15, 2021 at 6 pm Via Zoom**

Gail Lund, Morgan Wright, Beth Reavis, Mary Ballard, Laura McArthur, Pastor Steve Troisi, Carol Norris, Alan Hauser, Charlie Wallin, Janice Koppenhaver, Sandy Moretz, Emory Maiden, Luke Ramsdell and Jeff Voss.

**Call to Order** - Mary called the meeting order at 6 p.m.

**Devotion** - Gail provided a devotion on 10 things we might want to know about St. Patrick.

**Review Updated Council Ground Rules** - Mary reviewed the ground rules.

- Please raise your hand to indicate that you would like to speak.
- Please give your name and state your views on the matter under discussion, including any questions or concerns you may have.
- In order to allow others ample opportunity to join in the conversation, please keep any subsequent comments by you on this issue/motion succinct and to the point.
- Please remain quiet when others have the floor so everyone can hear.
- Please be respectful of those voicing differing opinions.

**Congregational Input** - Pastor Steve presented the responses regarding returning to in-person worship. About 65% would be interested in participating in outdoor worship. A few people commented on Bethany's worship. Online service is enjoyed by about 85%. A few people commented that homebound people could participate with the online worship more easily. Laura asked if the sample size of 40 responses was low compared to the fall survey. Pastor Steve said that we received 100 responses to the Fall Survey.

**Approval of Council Meeting Minutes** - Alan made a motion to approve with one correction and Gail seconded. Motion carried.

**Strategic Visioning** - Pastor Steve said we're on track for the strategic visioning and will address these in the Council dreaming section.

- a. 2020-2021 Council Goal Setting
  - i. Planned Giving Meeting Workshop (Jan or Feb)
  - ii. Constitution Update, Financial Policy Update (begin in Jan)
  - iii. Audit what we've done during COVID (May)

## 7. Policy - Mary

- a. **Policy Updates:** Constitution Update - Pastor Steve said we will get it done.

## 8. Monitoring and Oversight

### a. Reports:

- i. **Senior Pastor Report** - Vera is back and ramping back up with all the work coming with Holy Week. We will get an intern who will find out on March 26th, but he will be introduced to the congregation in July. Pastor Steve said Jennifer painted the ushers' closet and organized it. Two matching chairs have been placed in the narthex with plans of adding a new cabinet in the corner with a monitor above the cabinet. Carol noted that we should leave the monitor off for the time being, so as not to encourage people to linger in the Narthex. Gail asked about getting rid of the lectern and just placing the guest book on the Usher's Table. Pastor Steve said that this could be done. Jennifer will continue to look for the right sized cabinet and for a good deal on a monitor.

#### 1. Engagement Report

- ii. **Campus Ministry Coordinator Report** - LSA is still meeting online and thinking about meeting outside near the end of the semester.

- iii. **Music Ministry Report**

- iv. **Administrative Secretary Report**

- v. **Facilities Manager Report**

- vi. **Treasurer Report** - Adjusted Monthly Giving/Cumulative Giving - Jeff said the giving budget, we're behind. However, with expenses being down, we have a small cushion. Looking forward in the next 3-5 years we will have some major expenses (roof, Council House wiring, boiler, partial paving, etc.). Pastor Steve noted that the Council House designated fund still stands at a negative balance of \$7700. Pastor Steve said compared to previous years, giving is lagging. Some of the issue is that December giving hasn't been as high as in years past. The positive is that the giving has been far more consistent, just consistently lower. The financial projections (p. 28) projections are total giving will be \$281,000. Jeff hopes that we'll be able to see more giving when in-person worship begins and as people adjust to the changing tax laws.

### b. Old Business (10 minutes):

- i. **Security Protocol Group** (Sandy and Carol) - No update
- ii. **Fire Alarm System** (Pastor Steve and Jeff) - Grace has received a \$10,000 Gift.
- iii. **Wilkes Property** (Pastor Steve and Jeff)
- iv. **Growing Grace Capital Campaign Update** (Pastor Steve) - over \$100,000+ received so far! We've hit the point where we can pay off the

remaining Councill house and have about \$40,000 toward the Carriage House Update.

v. **Carriage House Update-** Pastor Steve reported that the tenant, Mike, will be moved out as of March 20th. The house will need to be cleaned out. Pastor Steve has asked Bradley Dowdy to take a closer look at the house for potential renovations.

c. **New Business** (30 minutes)

i. **Updates on adjustments to schedule related to COVID-19 -**

Mary briefly summarized current statistics. The concerns by public health are around potential new outbreaks. Charlie said we were at 18% of Watauga residents in February having been vaccinated and expect that number to double by March 16th. There are still concerns about the 65+ age group because only 62% have been vaccinated. Mary said that there is some vaccine resistance. Pastor Steve said Libby got her second shot on March 12th. Susan and Steve have had theirs and Kathy has gotten her first shot. Pastor Steve said that Bethany Lutheran is doing smaller services along with Boone UMC. Charlie said the First Baptist has reopened. Charlie made a motion to open church on April 18th since Pastor Steve will be fully vaccinated as of April 13th, with previously agreed upon protocols and pre-registration in place. Beth seconded. Alan noted that we may be opening too quickly with the new variants and it will be very difficult to keep the spread of COVID under control. He said that if we waited until the middle of May, it would be safer. Alan noted the enthusiasm about the wider distribution of vaccinations, but recommended that we should go slowly. Gail wondered if we could have a "vaccination only" service, but Mary pointed out that this could be discriminatory against families with children under 18. Pastor Steve said he would be comfortable leading worship service after being fully vaccinated. Luke asked if we voted to have a date to open, but then there was a surge, could we change our minds? Pastor Steve said that this would be possible but would require either a special meeting or email vote. Jeff commented that he's comfortable being an usher and reminded that it will be a learning curve regarding participation at church. Beth added that if there is an overflow, then they can be pointed to the Youtube channel. Laura asked how the information would be conveyed. Pastor Steve will write a letter to the congregation and would like to create a video about returning to worship. There would be a check-box in the registration where people acknowledge that they have read the protocols and intend to follow them. Vote: eight in favor, two against

and one abstention.

ii. **Outdoor Events for Children** - A brief outdoor Easter egg hunt after the 11 a.m. service is being proposed. Previously, we said that youth have been able to meet outside. A registration would be required. Gail made a motion that we amend the previous restriction of 25 people to allow up to 50 children and adults with masks and social distancing. Vote: Nine in favor, one against, and one abstention.

iii. **Sound System Update** - Pastor Steve said the technician continued to trace the issues with the sound system. The main issue with the microphones is that the signal can't quite reach the receivers. We are still waiting on a solution. Morgan gave another possible solution of wiring including wiring receivers in the front of the church instead of the in choir loft. Pastor Steve said a solution may be as simple as a longer antenna.

iv. **Intern for 2021-2022:** Grace Place College Interns - Two LSA students have been contacted and we are asking for a parent signature for students under 21. Pastor Steve will be helping to get them to discern what jobs they might do.

v. **Update from Council Dream Session** - Pastor Steve said we hope to have a brochure and a temple talk when we're back in person.

vi. **Update from Troutman Board** - The Troutman Board met and gave grant funds out. In the future, we may have a Troutman Sunday and have one of the recipients come do a temple talk.

Alan asked if the online services will continue and Pastor Steve said that they will continue to record the services through August because we can sing along with the recording, but not in church, currently. Pastor Steve said that in talking to other pastors, recorded services have had declining participation, but we haven't seen the same thing with our online worship service. Pastor Steve emphasized that when we return to in-person worship in April, it will be the service only, without singing and without communion. There also would not be any in-person Sunday School, nursery, or coffee hour to start.

**Next Meeting:** April 19, 2021 at 6 p.m.

i. Devotion: Carol

## 10. **Adjourn Meeting with the Lord's Prayer** - Gail

### **Upcoming Devotions**

May - Emory

June - Beth

July - Janice  
Aug - Charlie