

Minutes
2016 Church Council Meeting
April 25, 2016
7:00 – 8:30 pm

Attendees: Kate Sturgis (Moderator), Todd Vetter (Senior Minister), Lynn DeHart, Lynne Devnew, Jim Garrett, Rosemary McGreevy, Bob Mustard, Nancy Von Stackelberg, Sandy Von Stackelberg, Jan Zabilski and Patti MacLennan (Senior Deacon)

Opening

Council was opened with a prayer, offered by Todd.

Kate reviewed the agenda.

We discussed the shooting very early Sunday morning that had involved our Senior Trustee, Tom Brayer. Tom had taken his dog out and was shot by a random shooter; Tom is fine and back at work after a day at South Shore hospital. The randomness is terrifying for Tom, his family, and all of us. Jan is to order an edible arrangement for the Brayer family and share we are praying with them.

Minutes and Treasurer's report

Minutes from the March 28, 2015 council meeting were approved as written following several brief discussions:

- Ascertained all additions to the prior draft minutes had been made.
- We had discussed the formal addition of the Senior Deacon and the Senior Trustee to council at our last meeting and been in agreement. This addition means we should think about the size of council – do we want it to grow by two members or do we want to elect two fewer at large members and stay the same size. We placed this decision on the agenda for the next meeting, to be held on May 9.

Our treasurer, Jim Garrett, reviewed the March financial report (filed separately). The reports included the combined church/PCCP numbers and each piece separately. There was a discussion of the need to separate the memorial garden and the memorial fund – Jim is to follow up on this. Lynn observed there have been no requests for funding from the Memorial Fund this past year.

Nominating

We briefly discussed nominating. There were no volunteers submitted on the self-nominating sheets. Nominating will be a focus of our May 9 meeting. Between now and then council members are to work with the committees they liaison with to identify nominees and bring these names to the May 9 meeting. We recognize we will not have the nominating sheets available in time to include them in the annual report. They will be printed on a separate page to be distributed at the annual meeting.

Pastor's Report

The majority of this meeting was devoted to the Pastor's Report. Todd shared he has accepted a call at the 1st Congregational Church of Madison, CT. He noted he and Sarah believe it is a good time for the

family to move and Todd believes is a necessary time for the church to have fresh leadership. Kate observed how difficult this will be for the congregation as a whole and for many of us personally.

Plans for notifying the congregation. Letters are being sent to all members of the congregation using first class stamps. The letters are to be mailed on Tuesday and so should all arrive on Wednesday. There will also be a blast email with the letter as an attachment sent on Wednesday.

Planning for Todd's move

Todd noted that his call agreement with Pilgrim Church includes the agreement to give a 90 day notice. He believes staying until the end of July would not be in the interests of our congregation, and his new congregation would like him to be there sooner. Todd would like to stay at Pilgrim through the end of the school year, the children are not at all eager to move. We set a tentative date for Todd's last day and the separation service as Sunday, June 26th.

Todd asked if Sarah and the children might stay in the house through the end of July; this would allow the family to move directly from the parsonage to their new home. He noted that, if we have identified an interim minister before then and the interim would like to move into the parsonage, of course the Vetter family would not expect to stay. We agreed we could see no reason for the family to leave before the end of July unless we had a new interim moving in before that time. An interim is likely to be local.

Todd has some vacation time coming; he will be forfeiting his sabbatical for the move.

Planning for interim period

Don Remick will join Council and Deacons at a special meeting on Wednesday, May 4 to discuss planning for the interim period. Don will help us discern where our church strengths lie and where we will need help from our interim minister, to help us call someone who will help us focus on what we need most. For example, we have a strong youth program, so the interim does not need to have strengths in working with youth; we know we need help with stewardship. As Todd put it, the interim should be able to tell us in a pastoral way how to bend our gifts into areas where we have a lack of energy.

Selecting an interim is a relatively quick process; but we do not want to rush the process. We then expect to spend a year working with an interim before beginning the search for a new minister. It is possible to hire a bridge interim for the summer. Don will help us discern whether we should pursue this option; there are many experienced, retired ministers in our local area.

The interim process has changed considerably since the last time we went through the process and Don will share this new process with us, including the plan for forming a committee to handle the call process. Lynn recalled serving on the committee that called Bev Weinhold, noting that Skip Shippers and two or three others had served on the committee. Kate shared she had been thinking the committee should include 2 council members, 2 deacons, and 2 young members of the congregation. We don't know whether it is necessary to include new members on the interim search team, but want younger members to know their interests are being considered. We have some younger church members who are experienced church people and might consider them as potential interim search committee members.

Staff concerns

Fortunately the upcoming staff transition time is in the summer when there is normally less activity at Pilgrim. Church leaders will be needed to help smooth the transitions. Emily's leave is from May 23 – August 5. Cathy and Terri are leaving on June 11; Todd anticipates the new church administrator will be hired very soon to allow for a transition.

New member concerns

We have one of our larger new member classes joining the church on May 8th, their welcoming breakfast is scheduled on May 7. Todd will seek to speak with each of them individually before the breakfast.

New Business

The pictorial directory using the pictures Rosemary Tufankjian and Sue Bradford took over a year ago is taking a big step forward. It is aligned with the recently printed church directory. A self-managed site will soon be available. Congregants can deselect from the online directory if they do not want to be included and will also be able to change the picture or have a listing with no picture. Lindy Keay, Janet Ritch, Barbara Kelley, and Sandy Von Stackelberg have been working together on this and are each able to help others through the process. The details will be announced very soon.

We discussed landscaping for the Habitat house we have been major contributors to. We would like to help with the landscaping and many potential ways to do this were discussed. It was observed we should look at the contributions already made and the plans for the landscaping before determining how else Pilgrim Church might want to be involved.

Bob Mustard closed our council meeting with prayer.

Upcoming dates and plans

Wednesday, May 4 at 7 pm – A joint meeting of church council and the deacons with Associate Conference Minister Don Remick to discuss Todd leaving Pilgrim Church. Topics to discuss include Todd's departure ceremony and calling an interim minister. Tom Brayer, senior deacon, should also be invited to this meeting. Kate will email us each a link to a UCC booklet on Interim Ministry that should be read before this meeting.

Monday, May 9 at 7 pm – Special council meeting to focus on the Annual Meeting – including nominating (bring names for committees you are liaison to), council size and our request for permission to continue our current church governance approach for another year. Patti asked that we also discuss having a human answer the church phone. The agenda should also include a discussion of plans for the celebration honoring Cathy and Terri on June 5.

Sunday, May 22 following worship – Pilgrim Church Annual Meeting

Monday, May 23 – Council meeting of the new church council

Sunday, June 5 – Honor Cathy and Terri at fellowship following worship. Council will host. Lynn will personally invite Cathy and Terri.

Sunday, June 26 – Tentatively set as the date for Todd's separation service at Pilgrim.

Prepared by: Lynne Devnew