



PCUU Board of Trustees Monthly Meeting Minutes

August 16, 2015

Present: Rev. Jeff Briere; Bryan Davis, President; Geoff Johnson, Vice President; Lance Maynard, Robyn Miessler-Kubanek, Kathleen Watson, and Gary McGraw, Treasurer

Absent: Kylene Loughrey

Also Present: Joyce Nielsen, Janet Federer, Marcia Swift, and Mary Huneke

Pre-meeting discussion on developmental ministry conversations and application.

- After discussions, have many components of goals, but not overarching yet.
- Kathleen suggested gathering the granules up and organizing them according to larger topics. Bryan would like to take larger topics and organize comments under them.
- Bryan noted the application is intended to show that we have thought deeply about our situation and that we are committed to taking steps to improve.

Meeting called to order at 12:36 PM.

One Good Minute

Order of Business

Bryan suggested changing the order of agenda items to accommodate those attending to discuss specific topics.

Ministerial Search Committee Update

- Rev. Briere suggested a joint effort on creating the application process because of the difference between a developmental versus settled minister process.
- Bryan asked that first joint meeting of search committee include Board members, in order to begin discussion about the shared nature of the endeavor and how the responsibilities will be allocated. Robyn suggested the Board can put together a version of the application while the committee puts together its own version, and then representatives from both groups can harmonize the two.
- Board involvement will decrease when the application is submitted, and assuming Peoples is selected for the program, the search committee will be fully involved in evaluating and interviewing candidates.



- Bryan noted the application has to be earnest, showing what's wrong and what our shortcomings are. We're applying to be in the program, not necessarily for a specific minister. Kathleen added this approach is the opposite of how recruitment packages are typically created to talk up the positive aspects of a congregation.
- Next step: Robyn will wrap up recruiting for committee and arrange for the first meeting.
- The Board agreed to meet with a MidAmerica Region congregational life consultant on September 27 to ask questions and discuss the process. Rev. Briere will confirm the meeting date and time with the consultant.

Social Justice Council, with Marcia Swift

- **Helping Hands Ministry:** Jim Federer approached the Council to discuss the ongoing outreach project, which Peoples has been supporting for many years. He asked them to evaluate whether to continue support. The Council did and now recommends in favor of continuing support. This support was already budgeted for 2015, so monetary contribution to the endeavor will continue as in previous years.
Rev. Briere noted the work of Helping Hands Ministry is similar to a discretionary fund within a congregation, and asked for such a line item to be included in our budget on an ongoing basis. Peoples has had a ministerial discretionary fund in the past. Gary will look at the budget and locate the line item.
- **Environmental Social Action Project for our property after church on September 13:** The Council has received permission from Rev. Briere to take the water from the water communion outside and give back to the land. Afterwards they would like an organized effort to weed, harvest kale, and begin growing rhubarb to give to Feed Iowa First. Marcia will put news in the Voice and Weekly.
- **Banners:** The Council proposes hanging two banners with text on the outside walls of the building to cover the crosses, which would cost ~\$1000 installed. They would like the banners to be hung before the end of the year.
The Board would like a full proposal with design sketches and a final price quote. Bryan suggested considering the banners a capital improvement, rather than a social justice endeavor.
- **Financial:** the Council would like to have a line in the budget to track their efforts. Gary noted a budget line already exists for outreach, plus the Council has raised funds through their t-shirt sales. Bryan added that the fundraising activities of the Council makes the Board more confident about moving forward with projects, and the Board approved moving forward with banners as outlined above.



Minutes

Motion: Robyn moved to approve the July minutes with one edit. Kathleen 2nd.

In the discussion of contract renewal: replace “in lieu of” with “contingent on.”

The motion passed with no dissent.

Reports

Minister: the Board already addressed the question of meeting with a congregational life consultant from the MidAdmerica Region.

Administrator:

- a. The Board agreed to keep age of copier in mind, and plan for replacement in the upcoming budget. To the question of whether we own or lease the copier, Robyn noted Peoples purchased the copier when its original lease was up.
- b. Robyn suggested evaluating whether to hire a groundskeeper for regular maintenance such as weeding. Gary noted that we can schedule/organize regular exterior maintenance, though we would still need someone to organize such an effort. Rev. Briere said he would ask Pam to begin gathering information about hiring a groundskeeper.

Finance:

- a. July came out pretty well, though the church is still below ideal projections. Pledge statements went out in July.
- b. Gary noted the committee expressed concern over proposal to remove offering from regular service. Geoff said adding collection boxes could help people to contribute if they came to events outside of worship services. The Board agreed adding collection boxes could afford more opportunities for people to give if they aren't at services. The details to be worked out at a later date.
- c. Finally, the Van Vechten Guild funds have been transferred and will be kept in a separate liability account.
- d. On discussion of individual group funds apart from those with specific histories such as VVG and youth trips, the Board agreed philosophically the money belongs to the church as a whole. Gary noted the church can and has asked groups to curtail spending in times of tight funds, in spite of listed budget amounts. Bryan will work on putting together a fundraising policy.



Motion: Kathleen moved to approve all reports as discussed. 2nd by Geoff, and the motion passed with no dissent.

Discussion: Fall Stewardship Campaign

- Bryan would like to set some goals for the campaign, to give Sue Davis direction for the theme and strategy. Perhaps we will set smallish goal over number of years, which people work to reach on an ongoing basis such as a 3% increase. We need to state a goal increase (percent), decide on the theme/frame, and how to explain what we would do with the increased money, if we get it.
- Bryan also discussed some other funding options he has been researching, which include crowd funding and grants available from the Cedar Rapids (Community Fund). He suggested Peoples could put together a grant to request partial funding for a developmental minister salary or a time specific salary startup for a congregational life director position. He added that the congregational life director could also be a key driver in increasing funding.
- Gary noted we have to account for the developmental minister's salary for part of the 2016 budget, so the Board has to decide how much we will be able to offer. Geoff suggested we put a clause in the contract that salary increases will be contingent on meeting fundraising goals.
- Robyn said that three major themes have surfaced repeatedly in the after-church discussions: Religious Education, the church facilities and aesthetics, and revitalizing congregational life. She suggested we focus on one of those three areas of concern. Gary suggested focusing on revitalizing RE and focusing more attention on our youth program. Bryan said many other churches focus energy on youth programs as ways to help develop future leadership.
- Kathleen said the theme could be REV It Up (Religious Education Vitalization), and include adult religious education. Based on what Bryan explained about a service he plans for September, Robyn suggested the theme could also be about future generations, and/or that our congregation stands at a crossroads.
- Bryan said the campaign should roll out in September, and decided on the 20th after some discussion. Rev. Briere and Bryan will coordinate worship services to help with kickoff on both the 20th and the 27th.
- Bryan will talk with the RE Council and Sue Davis sometime during August to get some thoughts on how to work RE into the fundraising campaign.



Covenant of Right Relations Draft

Kathleen would like Board to review it and give conceptual feedback. She is not looking for text editing. Bryan suggested discussing over email and then we can review overall at next meeting.

Collaboration with Iowa City UU Church

Rev. Briere reported on contact with Iowa City church with regards to inviting their congregation to worship and have lunch with us. The minister is interested, and will talk to the leadership in Iowa City about collaborating sometime this fall.

Motion: Kathleen moved to adjourn the meeting. Lance 2nd, and the meeting adjourned at 3:05 PM.

Minutes submitted by Robyn Miessler-Kubanek