

Council Meeting Minutes - May 17, 2021 at 6 pm Via Zoom

Attending: 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, and Luke Ramsdell . Jeff Voss

1. **Call to Order** - Mary called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

2. **Devotion** - Emory believes that Peter: 1:7 is a particularly good passage to help bring his worries and cares to God. It's been a worrisome year and this piece of scripture helps him focus.

3. **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.

4. **Congregational Input** - Gail saw several members at Farmers Market and members wanted communion. Carol said a member asked on the budget where the additional income came from. Pastor Steve said parking, rental, money from Synod for campus ministry.

5. **Approval of Council Meeting Minutes** - Beth made a motion to approve with a correction. Laura seconded. Motion carried.

6. **Strategic Visioning** -

a. 2020-2021 Council Goal Setting - Pastor Steve said the revised Constitution was sent out and the bylaws are embedded in the Constitution. He said it was easier to start with a model Constitution. There are 20 proposed changes. Synod has to approve the changes. Pastor Steve reviewed a "Summary of Changes in the New Constitution". There are some changes regarding the members and some classifications that reflect what we're actually doing. He's hoping to put some flexibility in a range of Council members of 6-12. If a member resigns, the business can still continue. This document was to get a draft to the Synod for a tentative approval and they may send changes back to us with a vote in June at the Synod meeting. If there are changes, it will be contingent on acceptance of their proposed changes. Laura asked with the range of members including the officers. It would include the officers, but not the pastor or ex officio. The normal size of Council is 12, but others are going to a lower number.

i. **Planned Giving Meeting Workshop** (Aug. or Sept.)

ii. **Constitution Update, Financial Policy Update** (begin in Jan)

iii. **Audit what we've done during COVID** - Pastor Steve said that five Council members answered the survey. He will send it out closer to the June meeting to get everyone's response.

7. Policy - Mary

a. **Policy Updates: Constitution Update** - Review Draft Update at May meeting

8. Monitoring and Oversight

a. Reports:

i. **Senior Pastor Report** - Pastor Steve was watching worship attendance online when we came back to church. There isn't a big shift from the youtube watching. The encouraging information was that we're still seeing attendance in service is still low 20-40.

1. Engagement Report

ii. **Campus Ministry Coordinator Report**

iii. **Music Ministry Report** - End of academic year transitions

iv. **Administrative Secretary Report**

v. **Facilities Manager Report** - Estimates for the roof \$50-70k. Painting. TV for the Narthex for announcements. Kurt Fingler built a closet for Pastor Steve's robes and the acolytes/assisting ministers robes are in the sacristy. Alan said he and Gail were in a meeting and the church looks really good. Pastor Steve said the little hallway is really cleaned up and the whole building looks good.

vi. **Treasurer Report** - Adjusted Monthly Giving/Cumulative Giving - Jeff said we have no extra money and are a little behind, but able to pay bills. Please help by making a donation if you can. Typically, we have more money coming in, but it is uncertain with Covid. Pastor Steve said that the giving for April was the lowest, but got significant gifts the first few days of May. Jeff said usually with the tax deadlines, people may be saving money for taxes.

b. Old Business:

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** -- Solar Farm Conversation (Pastor Steve and Jeff) Pastor Steve went to the Wilkes County GIS and you can take the parcel ID and can see where it is. Pastor Steve said we need to do something with it or sell it in Dec 2022. What we need most often is a steady income. Pastor Steve saw a solar farm on the way to Hendersonville and he talked with Jeff Ramsdell who has knowledge about energy. NRLP has been looking for this kind of partnership. Janice has a contact in BREMCO. In this case, we would clearly cut the section then the power company manages.

iv. **Carriage House Update** (Pastor Steve said the Carriage House is almost empty, is pretty gross, all appliances are gone. Jennifer is going to reach out to Kerry Norris to look at the foundation. We may just update, but not renovate. Need to get the carpet out.

vii. **AMMPARO Migrant Children** - Postpone until June to discuss.

c. **New Business** (40 minutes)

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

Given the changes in the CDC guidelines, we need to discuss the changes. Pastor Steve said the Synod Task Force didn't meet. Mary called the Synod and the existing guidelines stand. CDC decided to change course from everyone in masks and social distancing to a more localized view, but people that aren't vaccinated need to continue to wear masks. Gov. Cooper relaxed the masks and social distancing. What do we do at our church - change policy or stay the same course?

Alan said the thing that he had observed was disagreement about what different groups think they should do. And, in looking at the overall situation, what is the result either way. We should continue a little longer to see what result of the upcoming holiday.

Gail said in church most everyone has been vaccinated and feeling like they're being penalized and want to have communion.

Beth said she was concerned about variants that might interrupt the health of children. Currently, Watauga County has 41% vaccinated with 1 dose and 45% with two vaccinations.

Luke said that the basic habits of masks and social distancing have become a norm and seems sensible not to get out of the habit just yet.

Morgan wondered if anyone knows of cases in Watauga County. Mary said she can look it up very quickly. 8 active cases in Watauga, 13 in Ashe. Actively monitoring 24 in Watauga county.

Laura asked Pastor Steve how tied are we to the Synod's guidance. Pastor Steve said there aren't a lot of guidelines.

Alan helped out at Holy Communion for ten people and they had communion with little packets. We could add communion fairly easily. Pastor Steve said it's about 50 cents per packet.

Luke said we know that transmission risks are not on surfaces.

Jeff said that he can agree with most everyone to move forward. Pastor Steve and the staff have a list of suggested changes.

Charlie said that the County and ASU have not lifted the mask mandates. Jeff said the businesses will likely maintain the mask mandates.

Gail said four people at Sunday service will not wear a mask. What would he do? Maybe we should think about the changes and how it would affect the attendance.

Charlie said he still worries about the children. It will be mid to late June before the children are fully vaccinated. Beth said until the vaccination rates are higher, we should maintain wearing masks.

Pastor Steve reminded people to wear the masks and most did at the service. He wondered about the level of risk of people who are unvaccinated from a vaccinated person. Pastor Steve showed a document following suggested guidelines. After some discussion,

Morgan said he liked the idea of encouraging, but not required, so people will do what they see fit. Luke said the main thing is encouraging, but not requiring masks, that people won't do it. It may be prudent to require for a few more weeks.

Alan and Laura both are concerned about the overall plan. Pastor Steve said he's okay with having unmasked people as long as he can be masked and keep social distance. His sense is that the plan for reopening is needed to update. Carol complimented Pastor Steve for the work he's done.

Charlie moved that we leave the mask as a mandate with amendments for indoor and outdoor gatherings. Alan seconded. Mary suggested that we continue to require masks for all indoor activities. Pastor Steve suggested requiring masks for worship and groups over 15, indoor activities for people over 16 and masks are not required outside.

9 yes, 3 no.

Sunday Morning Worship: Pastor Steve suggested discontinuing pre-registration, but have people sign in. Ushers would not escort people in. Alan suggested keeping the distance for the third pew. Charlie thought if you don't do registration and add communion, then how will you know who is coming. Pastor Steve suggested continuing pre-registration, but no seat assignment which would allow the number of members who attend. Beth pointed out that pre-registration would provide a number for communion.

Post Worship Gathering - Council reviewed the points and made some adjustments for recommendations. Gail said most people have left immediately after the service, so it hasn't been an issue. Emory made a motion and Carol seconded of approving the Sunday morning gathering. Motion carried.

Singing: Pastor Steve said that Libby has measured the choir loft and they would be required to wear the singers' masks and a group of up to 8 choir members. All in favor of allowing the choir to sing with masks. All approved.

Communion: To add communion to services, Pastor Steve would be masked and an assisting minister would put the little cup on a table. Beth made the motion to approve the communion using the procedure that Pastor Steve described. Morgan seconded. Laura asked if social distancing can be maintained. Pastor Steve will give added instructions during services. 10 approved, 2 opposed.

Lay Readers: A motion was made by Alan and seconded by Morgan to approve adding lay readers. 11 approved, 1 opposed.

Other In-Person Activities at Church: Carol made a motion to allow AA to meet without registration. Charlie seconded. Motion carried.

Groups will just meet one event at a time using the established guidelines. Gail made the motion. Carol seconded. Motion carried.

Food and drink. Alan made the motion that food and drinks may be served at in person gatherings of 25 or less. Gail seconded. 10 approved. 2 opposed.

Choir Practice: Motion to accept choir practice in person with masks was made by Alan and seconded by Luke. Motion carried.

Church Office:

- a. Worship Leaders? Lecter? Assistant Minister?
- b. Communion?
- c. Singing in Worship?

ii. **Intern for 2021-2022;** Grace Place College Interns Meeting on Tuesday, Met with college interns next week

iii. **Spring Stewardship Drive** - June-July 18th Stewardship Drive

iv. **Budgeting Process Update** -- Schedule Council Budget Workshop - end of Monday, June 28th at 6 p.m.

v. **Nominating Committee** - The committee will start.

vi. **Update on the High Country Coalition** - Holy Communion will call another interim.

vii. **Extending Associate of Music Ministry position to August** - Lauren is paid about \$260/month until August and Pastor Steve recommends that we use the travel fund to cover the salary. Alan made the motion, and Beth seconded.

Meeting adjourned at 8:49 p.m.

9. **Next Meeting:** June 21, 2021 at 6 p.m.

- i. Devotion: Beth

10. **Adjourn Meeting with the Lord's Prayer** (5 minutes) - Emory

Upcoming Devotions

July - Janice

Aug - Charlie

