**First Church Congregational Council Meeting**

**Wednesday, November 30; 7:30 pm – via Zoom**

**Minutes**

Attending: Jim Muschett, Patty Bilotto, Rita Skog, Howard Slagter, Craig Way, Wendy Williams-Brown, Rev. Vanessa Rose, Carrie Curtin, Nikki Kenney

Call to Order at 7:36pm

Invocation delivered by Wendy William-Brown

• Nikki Kenney joined to propose a one time request for the Congregation to participate in the holiday CIRI Toy Drive. Jim Muschett made a motion that we move forward with a solicitation for gift cards to CIRI Holiday Drive through emails, Weekly Word, and social media posts. Seconded by Patty Bilotto. Unanimously approved.

• Howard Slagter made a motion to approve the minutes from the October 25 Council Meeting. Jim Muschett seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

• David Spollett has been hospitalized with a virus at St. Vincent’s, but is moving to an airbnb nearby in Stratford.

•  “Love All” strategic pathway action items – steward for In-Reach?

**Board Reports**

Pastoral Team report from Rev. Vanessa Rose.

* Letters and cards were delivered after Sunday service.
* Idea to give an ornament since they are without their own Christmas decorations
* Stock fridge and go caroling to their house
* Jim Muschett made a motion to waive the restriction on David’s distance from FCC upon his retirement. Patty Bilotto seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.
* Discussion to move up the Pastor Emeritus honorific for David earlier than 2 years.

Resource Development report from Joy Nazzaro delivered by Jim Muschett.

* 100 pledges total $248,000 to date
* Pledge letters going out shortly
* 3 Kings Bazaar is set for Saturday. 60 volunteers have signed up.

Finance report from Howard Slagter.

* Pledges $15-20 off from where we would like it to be to date.
* Reporting loss of $15-20 in budget in year to date.
* Need to finalize the Sanctuary projects and Sunnie Holmes repairs.
* Borrowing rates have gone up but just reflective of the current market.
* First draft of budget is in process
* Pledging is trending down and that difference is being made up by rental income and The Store revenue.
* Investment balances have not changed a lot.
* Hospitality line items were significantly over budget in 2022 resulting from special events like David’s retirement. Will be slightly higher for 2023.
* Children’s Education and Music budgets increased for 2023.
* Total payroll is down because fewer people are on staff for 2023. Part-time employees do not receive benefits.
* McKinsey Consulting Firm has done study on “healthy churches” and how their spending was allocated.
	+ Facilities costs: 25% of budget / FCC 29%
	+ Human Resources: 50% of budget / FCC 49%
	+ Programming: 15% / FCC 12%
	+ Outreach: 10% / FCC 10%
	+ FCC has more diversified streams of revenue than other “healthy churches”
* Jim Muschett made a motion to approve the Budget as presented with a $5-10K discrepancy as we finalize accounting and pledges before the February Finance Meeting. Motion was seconded by Rita Skog and unanimously approved.

Personnel update from Patty Bilotto.

* New Facilities Manager, Albert Faustini, has been hired
* Rev. Jake Joseph will be “guest preaching” once a month
* Mark Engstrom is resigning from the Personnel Board.

Resource/Facilities update from Craig Way.

* Sanctuary HVAC final backordered items (“economizers”) have come in and will be installed.
* In spring we will plant screening in the courtyard.
* The Eunoia Room Kitchen is all complete and functional. Exterior door from the kitchen needs restoration.
* The Facilities Board will have a meeting soon. Albert will be included.
* Question about air exchange in Sanctuary to be turned off in winter when not in use to conserve cost on utilities.

Worship update from Wendy Williams-Brown.

* contact Wendy if interested in volunteering as usher.

Outreach update from Rita Skog.

* Renewing membership with CONECT and Council of Churches
	+ Candle of Witness on Sunday for CONECT
* Requesting donations for YMCA
* Requesting gift for children through Covenant to Care
* Soup Kitchen Saints for Merton House starting back up in January

Faith Formation update by Rita Skog

* John Harmon led a well attended study group about Islam
* Ariana Holmes is leading another well attended study group on Maya Angelo
* Success of Zoom option for some of the Faith Formation activities has been very well received

**New Business**

• Jim and Vanessa did a walk through with two Officers from Fairfield Police Department about worship service security. Scheduled a meeting with a security firm about next steps.

• Ushers and greeters will continue to be solicited.

**Future Meetings**

• Council meetings are the fourth Tuesday of the month.

• Next meeting: January 24, 7:30pm (zoom vs in-person TBD) / Committee Sabbatical during Advent

• All Church Finance Meeting: February 21, 2023

Benediction delivered by Rev. Vanessa Rose

Adjourned at 8:57pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Carrie Curtin, Clerk