

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MINUTES

September 10, 2007

Present: Rev. Gordon Forbes, Rev. Sandy Dodson, Nae Pearson, Marian Dirda, Sue Dollins, Trish Esposito, Jan Forbes, Dave Main, Cynthia Page, Dan Pence, Alison Petersen, Ruth Prindle, Jim O'Steen, Doris Raber, Anne Weissenborn, Leslie Weyn, Tim White.

Moderator Rev. Gordon Forbes called the meeting to order at approximately 7:30 p.m. He opened the meeting by reading the poem, *Trust in the Slow Work of God*, by Pierre Teilhard de Chardin.

The Council approved the minutes of the July 24, 2007 Special Meeting of the Executive Council, as presented. Approval of the minutes of the August 6, 2007 meeting was deferred.

Reports and Action Items

Nominating Committee—Trish Esposito presented the Nominating Committee's Report and moved that the Executive Council approve the slate of candidates recommended by the Committee. Sue Dollins seconded the motion. The motion passed without objection. Ruth Prindle thanked Trish, as well as Dave Main, for their work on the leadership roster list.

Trustees—Tim White presented a budget update. The Board of Trustees has prepared a provisional budget that would reduce expenses below what was approved at the annual meeting. The Trustees feel that this action is prudent because of the projected decrease in pledging for the current year. Tim reported that the Trustees and the Board for Stewardship believe that we have received about as many pledges as we are going to get. The total amount pledged is about \$50,000 less than was projected. The provisional budget would cut \$30,000 in expenses. There is a higher surplus from last year than expected; this accounts for the difference between the shortfall in pledges and the amount cut from the budget. Half of the \$30,000 reduction in expenses would be taken from the property budget, and half from programs. To make up the program cuts, each program area would be cut 20%. Tim said the Trustees would be meeting to decide whether the provisional budget should be recommended to the congregation. Tim asked the Council what action would be appropriate to bring the matter before the congregation. Tim said he recommended redefining the Town Hall meeting planned for September 23, 2007 as a special congregational meeting at which a vote could be taken. Marian Dirda asked whether there were any options to

consider other than the provisional budget. Tim said one option would be to approve a deficit budget. Dan Pence said that choices might be made about how to allocate budget cuts. Anne Weissenborn said that another option would be to approve supplemental fundraising efforts. Tim said that, up to now, information about the provisional budget has been communicated to Staff, the Council, and Boards and Committees. The information has not yet been communicated to the congregation at large. Rev. Gordon Forbes said that two weeks after the Town Hall meeting would be October 7, which is Rev. Susan Henderson's first Sunday in the pulpit. Doris Raber said that it would be more appropriate to wait a week or two after Rev. Henderson's arrival before scheduling a special congregational meeting. Tim White said that even waiting a month after the Town Hall meeting should not present a problem. Dan Pence **moved that information be presented on budget status at the Town Hall meeting on September 23, 2007, and that a special congregational meeting be called for October 21, 2007, to present a revised budget for approval.** Jim O'Steen seconded the motion. The motion passed without objection. Tim White said that he will put a short article in the next edition of NewsNotes, with a more detailed article to follow in a later edition.

Board for Stewardship—Alison Petersen reported that CCC has received 210 pledges for this year. Last year, there were 209 pledges. However, the amount pledged is only 95% of the amount pledged last year. The Board for Stewardship will have its first meeting September 11, 2007. Alison also reported that, in calling on some of those who pledged at a lower amount this year, the board learned that many of those contacted were experiencing transitions in their lives, such as retirement or moving. The calling effort also reinforced the importance of personal contact in the Stewardship process.

Board for Christian Education—Jan Forbes reported that the Board for Christian Education had launched its new Rotation Model curriculum on September 9, 2007. She said that the Board for Christian Education had sponsored a successful teacher training, as well. The C.E. Bulletin Board was relocated to provide greater visibility. Also, the Sunday evening youth programs and Youth Ensemble have begun. Cynthia Page raised a concern that sixth grade youth are not included in the middle school program. Rev. Sandy Dodson said that, historically, the program has been geared for "junior high" youth, i.e., seventh and eighth graders. Sandy said that one reason for this is that there is a need for more adult leadership for this age group. This is a continuing need that is not going away, Sandy said. Ruth Prindle suggested that the need for adult leaders be mentioned at the Town Hall meeting.

Music—Nae Pearson reported that the music program is off to a great start and that there is good communication with the Board for Christian Education.

Deacons—Dave Main reported that the meeting on issues regarding changes to the language of the CCC Covenant had not been well-publicized. Although there was an article in NewsNotes, the meeting was not listed in the Bulletin. Dave said that a number of new members of the Board of Deacons would be reading on Sunday mornings, and asked for the Council support them. The Deacons have placed an additional Memorial Board in the location formerly occupied by the C.E. Bulletin Board. The existing Memorial Board is filling up, Dave said. Rev. Sandy Dodson reported that pastoral care seems to be covered. She has not heard any negative feedback. Sandy said that she, Vicki Kemper, Sarah Anders, and others have been providing pastoral care in the period since Rev. Jim Todhunter’s retirement and before Rev. Susan Henderson’s arrival.

Marriage Policies—Rev. Gordon Forbes reported that, as a follow-up to last month’s discussion, he had called three other UCC churches to ask about their wedding policies. Gordon reported that all three of the churches he contacted have written policies. Gordon suggested that this issue be put before the Interim Minister. Dave Main **moved that the Wedding Policy Task Force meet with the Interim Minister after she enters on duty to develop a wedding policy.** Tim White seconded the motion. The motion passed without objection.

Board for Social Witness—Anne Weissenborn reported that the next meeting of the Board for Social Witness will be its retreat on September 22, 2007. She expressed the expectation that this would be a gloomy meeting in light of the proposed further cuts to mission giving and outreach. She said that, at one time, CCC’s mission giving was \$30,000, but for the coming year it may be as low as \$12,000. She said that the Board will try to look at other ways to reach out that don’t involve money.

Paper on Retiring Clergy—Rev. Gordon Forbes reminded the Council that Pete Hotchkiss had proposed adopting the paper drafted by Rev. Jim Todhunter “On the Conduct of Retired Clergy” as a CCC policy. Pete had planned to meet with the Transition Committee, but realized that this issue will require more time and discussion. However, discussion of this issue led to the realization that associate staff, including Rev. Sandy Dodson, Nae Pearson, and Sarah Anders, need a place to speak during the interim period, and it was suggested that the Transition Committee could fill that need. Dave Main agreed and said that perhaps the Transition Committee could be a bridge toward establishing a Pastor-Parish Relations Committee.

Safe Church Update—Rev Sandy Dodson Reported that the policy has been adopted. A workshop was planned, but it has been postponed. She is hoping that the

workshop will be rescheduled in the spring. Sandy said that Bud Dennie is working on issues related to protecting the private information gathered during background checks.

Williams Painting Auction—Tim White reported that the Virgil Williams painting will be auctioned by the Wechsler Gallery on September 15, 2007. He noted that the painting was featured on the cover of the catalog for the auction, so he hoped that would generate greater interest in the painting.

Covenant Discussion—Rev. Gordon Forbes reported that he would present a discussion of Covenants in the UCC after the 9:00 and 10:30 worship services on September 16, 2007. He said his presentation was intended to put the proposed new language into historical context. Gordon said that if the congregation wishes to proceed with revising the Covenant language, that issue could be on the agenda for the special congregational meeting on October 21, 2007.

New Business

Arrival of Interim Minister—Rev. Gordon Forbes said that Rev. Susan Henderson will arrive on September 17, 2007, to move into her office. Her first Sunday in the pulpit will be October 7, 2007. That Sunday is also a Communion Sunday and children will be joining in worship at 10:30. There was discussion of how to welcome Rev. Henderson. Gordon mentioned that someone from Vermont who knows Rev. Henderson would like to speak. A consensus was reached that there would be a reception for Rev. Henderson after the 10:30 worship service and that the visitor from Vermont would be invited to speak at the reception, if it seemed appropriate. Marian Dirda said that the Board for Church Life would provide some food for the reception and would also ask for donations.

Cell Phones—Alison Petersen asked that a reminder be given to turn off cell phones during worship.

Coffee Donations—Marian Dirda reported that some pilfering of cash coffee donations had occurred. She wondered whether providing a closed box for donations would be seen as not welcoming. There was a consensus that a closed box for donations was appropriate.

Rev. Gordon Forbes adjourned the meeting at approximately 9:15.

Respectfully submitted,
Leslie Weyn
Church Clerk