

Executive Council Minutes September 8, 2008

Present: Rev. Susan Henderson, Rev. Sandy Dodson, Trish Esposito, Dave Ackerman, Aldene Ault, Gordon Forbes, Tom Gustafson, Linda Hodson, Andy Holmes, Sallie Holmes, Pete Hotchkiss, Richard Jaeggi, Dave Main, Pete Macleod, Greg Muncill, Kate Rogers, Jackie Walters, Leslie Weyn, Tim White.

Moderator Trish Esposito called the meeting to order at approximately 7:31. Rev. Susan Henderson opened the meeting with a time of sharing and prayer.

Pete Hotchkiss moved that the minutes of the Council's August 4, 2008 meeting be accepted, as presented. Jackie Walters seconded the motion, which passed with one abstention.

Aldene Ault moved that the minutes of the Council's August 19, 2008 special meeting be accepted as presented. Dave Ackerman seconded the motion, which passed with three abstentions.

Racist Incident after 9:30 Worship Service on September 7, 2008

Rev. Sandy Dodson reported that, after the 9:30 worship service on September 7, a person who regularly attends that service, but is not a member of CCC, made racist remarks to Rev. Susan Henderson. Sandy reported that she spoke to the individual who made the remarks by telephone and the person offered to write a letter of apology. Rev. Susan Henderson said that she had written a letter to the individual. Gordon Forbes said that, in his view, this incident is not just a pastoral issue, but a corporate issue. Therefore, the church as a community needs to make a statement deploring the incident, Gordon said. There was consensus that Trish Esposito, as Moderator, Gordon, as Past Moderator, and Tim White, as Moderator-Elect, would draft a letter to the individual on behalf of CCC.

Pastor-Parish Relations Committee

As a result of the discussion of the racist incident directed at Rev. Henderson, the Council recognized that the Council, and CCC as a whole, needs to do a better job of caring for our pastors. Trish Esposito said that establishing a Pastor-Parish Relations Committee may be one way that CCC could move toward offering better care to the pastors. Trish explained that the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee serves to listen to the needs and concerns of the pastor, and explain and advocate for those needs to the congregation. The Committee also listens to the congregation and may bring needs and concerns of the congregation to the pastor. Trish said that Dick Sparrow, from the UCC's National office will be offering training on forming a Pastor-Parish Relations Committee at CCC on November 15, 2008. Trish asked the Council to recommend names of key individuals who should attend the training. Trish proposed that the Council establish and staff a Pastor-Parish Relations Committee on a one-year trial basis. Dave Ackerman said that the Personnel Committee has tried to function in this role, but he admitted there have been problems with this approach. Rev. Sandy Dodson explained that the advantage of a Pastor-Parish Relations Committee is that it does not have an evaluative function. It is

difficult for staff to be vulnerable when dealing with a committee that also performs the staff member's performance appraisal, Sandy said.

Communications Plan

Jackie Walters, Communications Officer, presented plans for improving communications at CCC. Jackie stressed that communications is a whole-church job, which needs to be supported, including financial support. Jackie proposed that we re-visit the self-study recommendation that led to the creation of the Communications Officer position to determine whether the position is sustainable. Jackie has established the following goals for the coming church year:

1. Recruit and lead a fully-staffed Communications Committee;
2. Identify persons with communications skills who are willing to help with short-term projects;
3. Be proactive in planning for communications needs;
4. Invite staff and volunteers to approach Communications Officer/Committee with needs.
5. Work with Boards and Committees to identify communications needs;
6. Work with Technology Committee to ensure that technology (e.g. church software) meets communications needs.

The Communications Officer cannot force church actors, including staff, lay leadership, Boards, and Committees to talk to one another when planning church events, Jackie said. This type of coordination is the responsibility of the Executive Council and each Board and Committee. Jackie plans to meet with each Board and Committee regarding its communications needs. She also plans to recruit individuals to handle the church's external communications on a quarterly basis.

Fundraising Subcommittee

Tim White reported that he will lead the Subcommittee, whose function is to review requests from CCC members to conduct fundraising outside the unified budget. Tim said that he would like the Subcommittee to be staffed by 4 persons, one of whom would be a representative of the Board of Trustees. Dave Ackerman and Pete Hotchkiss volunteered to serve on the Subcommittee, and Tom Gustafson said that the Trustees would provide a representative.

Retreat House Update

Trish Esposito reported that the Council needs to give attention at a future meeting to the structure of governance and planning for the Retreat House. Currently, the leadership/planning functions are split among several Boards: the Retreat House Task Force reports to the Council and is awaiting further direction; the Retreat House Committee reports to the Board of Trustees; the Camp Committee reports to the Board for Christian Education; Safe Church also has a role. There is a need to streamline these functions, Trish recommended. She said the Council will address this issue further at a future meeting.

Farewell Celebration

Trish Esposito announced that the tentative date for the farewell celebration for Rev. Sandy Dodson and Jaime is October 26. There will be a leave-taking service and other activities. The activities will be kid-focused for Jaime.

Board, Committee, and Staff Reports

Church Profile—Trish Esposito reported that Mike Breads, Maureen Ingram, and Sara Watson have agreed to draft the Church Profile for the Senior Minister search.

Ministers' Celebration—A service honoring Rev. Joey Noble will be held on October 19, Trish reported. Rev. Noble's family will participate. A service honoring all CCC's ministers will be held December 7.

Stewardship—Trish Esposito reported that the Board for Stewardship needs leadership and additional members. Trish said she plans to meet with the board to assess the needs and to formulate a strategy.

Christian Education—Rev. Sandy Dodson reported that training for Church School teachers and shepherds was held September 7. The new Church School year will kick off on September 14.

Church Life—Linda Hodson reported that the Board will host the all-church picnic on September 14.

Outreach & Engagement—Pete Macleod reported that the Board will staff a booth at the Takoma Park Festival.

Trish Esposito noted that Board meetings will be held September 15. The Board for Christian Education will lead pre-board worship. Trish requested that each Board be prepared to share some items from its agenda at the pre-board gathering.

Executive Council Retreat

Trish Esposito reminded the Council that the retreat is scheduled for September 13. Trish distributed handouts for the retreat session. The retreat will focus on developing possible staffing plans for CCC. The goal at the end of the day will be to propose 2 or 3 staffing plans, and to describe the pros and cons of each plan, Trish said. In addition, Trish said, we will revisit the timeline for the Senior Minister search.

Executive Session

The Council met in Executive Session from 10:07 to 10:30. The following motion was introduced by Tim White and seconded by Kate Rogers. The motion, as adopted, includes friendly amendments by Tom Gustafson and Dave Ackerman.

Moved, that the Executive Council express great appreciation for Rev. Susan Henderson's outstanding ministry, leadership, and service in her first year as Interim Senior Minister of Christ Congregational Church (UCC) and recommend that Trustees renew her contract on terms favorable to her.

The motion passed unanimously.

Rev. Susan Henderson closed the meeting with prayer.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:35.

Respectfully submitted,
Leslie Weyn
Church Clerk