Christ Congregational Church
Silver Spring, Maryland
Minutes of the Coordinating Council
February 1, 2021
[Gathered by video conference due to Covid-19 restrictions.]

Present:
- Kathie McConnell (Moderator)
- Paul Scribner (Moderator Elect)
- Matthew Braddock (Senior Minister)
- Jack Doggett (At-Large)
- John Gipson (Congregational Assets)
- Marjorie Hoffman (Justice and Witness)
- Sarah Ingram (Clerk)
- Aubra Love (Member Care & Fellowship)
- Jackie Lowery (Justice and Witness)
- Dean Ripple (Treasurer)
- Kevin Sturtevant (Congregational Giving)
- Leslie Weyn (Worship & the Arts)

Call to Order and Review of Agenda

Kathie McConnell, Moderator, called the Coordinating Council (CC) meeting to order at 7:10 pm and declared a quorum. Pastor Matt Braddock led the group in an opening prayer.

Kathie reviewed the meeting agenda and noted the new regular agenda time slot for any CCC members visiting a CC meeting; however, no guest signed in to the meeting on February 1st. Kathie will remind the congregation of the procedure for attending CC meetings.

Approval of the January 4, 2020 Coordinating Council Minutes. Sarah Ingram asked for any comments or corrections; hearing none, she asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Jackie Lowery so moved, Leslie Weyn seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Calendar Review. Kathie reviewed the CC calendar and accepted edits as suggested. Several updates about future activities were proposed for the Engagement Area Summaries.

- Action Item: Sarah Ingram will collect suggested edits to the 2/1 Engagement Area Summaries, finalize the document, and forward it to Paul Scribner for distribution. COMPLETED.

Updates on Programs, Activities, Events

Budget and Facilities
Dean Ripple shared that CCC revenue and expenditures have remained consistent month to month, resulting in an increasing cash position for the church. He urged the CC to remember that this is an anomaly year, based on increased pledging, higher non-pledge plate giving and greatly reduced expenses due to the closure of the church building. Dean provided an estimate, absent other emergencies, of what would be accumulated by June 30, 2021, over and above a healthy cash-flow amount needed to meet payroll, etc.

John Gipson updated the CC on his talks with leaders at other local churches about how they are navigating budgets and aging infrastructures. To date, he has heard of similar challenges but no new wisdom. He has collected a few tips about how best to rent space to other congregations.

John and Dean updated the CC about the ongoing repairs of building damage caused by lower level water incursion. John will finalize the selection of a vendor for the remaining work and Dean believes that it can be financed with money from insurance and from generous church donors.

The CC members then returned to the discussion about the handling of the predicted cash accumulation. There was consensus that the CC needs to have a clear proposal and communication that:
- augments but does not undercut the annual pledge campaign (not a substitute for giving to finance core costs or support to increase multi-year costs);
- dovetails with longer term financial security (the probable capital campaign for the HVAC project, increase to reserves or the Tate Endowment, reducing existing debt, etc.);
- that recognizes that Covid caused this surplus (largely from the building being closed) and that Covid is also creating deepened crises in the community (food insecurity, job loss, housing insecurity, education inequities); and
- CCC members, and the UCC, have numerous vital ideas that need funding.

The CC members added to prior brainstorming about how to apply this one-year windfall in a manner that reflects prudent financial management and commitment to covenants. There was also discussion about the role of the CC and of the congregation in making and executing the decisions. Kathie asked the CC members to bring to the March CC meeting their views on the process to use for crafting and communicating a proposal and on the proposal to be presented.

- **Action Item:** For the March CC meeting, each CC member should consider how the predicted cash accumulation should be allocated and the process and schedule for communicating with the congregation and sharing decision-making. COMPLETED.

**Insurance.** Kathie, Dean and John have determined that CCC needs a new volunteer to work specifically on issues concerning insurance policies for both the main church and the Retreat Center.

- **Action Item:** Kathie will contact one or more members, as necessary, to seek expertise and commitment for reviewing and researching insurance coverage issues for the CC. COMPLETED.
Coordinating Council January Retreat. Matt Braddock expressed his gratitude that CCC is weathering the Covid times so well, both in healthy online attendance and generous giving. Thus, unlike some other churches, the question is not whether we will be a church post-Covid but who do we want to be going forward, or what kind of church do we wish to be. Some things will evolve organically but for some things we will need to be more intentional. Before we worry about things like budgets, staffing models and organizational charts, we need to be intentional about being attuned to, and consciously investing in, the core skills needed to live well in community: being our authentic selves and caring for healthy relationships -- between us, among us, and with those beyond CCC. To support that skill building, Matt will design some exercises for the beginning of future CC meetings. Other retreat follow-up discussions will continue at future CC meetings.

Action Item: Matt Braddock will lead an opening exercise at the March CC meeting. COMPLETED.

Wrap-Up and Review

Senior Minister’s Report. Matt shared several topics for information or agreement.

- Beginning Sunday, February 7, CCC will start a “virtual coffee hour” after morning service. A staff member will facilitate each of 6-8 break-out zoom rooms, which participants can choose to enter or exit freely. Some rooms may be organized around themes like young adults, visitors and new members, etc.
- February is Black History Month and events will continue, culminating in Rev. Aubra Love preaching on the last Sunday.
- Ash Wednesday is February 17th. After consultation, the plan is to provide a drive-through opportunity to pick up a packet of ashes or to have Matt apply ashes (masks, through car window, fresh Q-tip per person). Ash packets will be delivered to the door of those interested but unable to go to the church parking lot. The zoom service later in the day would include time for people to open and apply ashes from their packet.
- Matt plans to reconvene the Covid Task Group to discuss (1) plans for Easter services, and (2) the extension of the church’s closed status (currently through Easter).

New Business: Aubra Love raised the question of how the CC can best support the revitalization of the Stewards of the Earth. 1 As Jim and Elizabeth Conklin are now managing family challenges, they have passed the baton to Alison Petersen. CC members expressed gratitude that Alison is bringing her passion to some new Stewards of the Earth activities with the regional Sacred Grounds/Sligo Creek community initiatives. For an initial workshop on January 31st, Aubra helped Alison coordinate the program and ground the activity in CCC covenants, but she noted it is not a Member Care role. The CC members agreed that now that Alison is the official group lead, she and the Justice & Witness Coordinators (Marjorie Hoffman and Jackie Lowery) should discuss how to get updates to the CC and

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1 Clerk: The Stewards of the Earth, which reports through Justice & Witness in the Annual Report, has long been ably led by the Conklins, along with a more facilities-focused Green Team. While not specifically prescribed in the Bylaws, generally the community activism functions have reported up to Justice and Witness and the Green Team facilities improvements have been coordinated through Building and Grounds (under Congregational Assets). When referring to CCC environmental activities, many use the group names interchangeably.
congregation and how the CC and J&W can best support the activities. Both Jackie and Marjorie attended the workshop and are enthusiastic about supporting the activities that Alison has launched.

**Action Item:** Marjorie Hoffman and Jackie Lowery will discuss with Alison how Justice and Witness can best support and promote the activities of Stewards of the Earth/Green Team within CCC and with the broader community, and will update the CC at the March meeting. COMPLETED.

**Action Item Review.**

- **Sarah Ingram** will collect suggested edits to the 2/1 Engagement Area Summaries, finalize the document, and forward it to Paul Scribner for distribution. COMPLETED.
- For the March CC meeting, each CC member should consider how the predicted cash accumulation should be allocated and the process and schedule for communicating with the congregation and sharing decision-making. COMPLETED.
- **Kathie McConnell** will contact one or more members, as necessary, to seek expertise and commitment for reviewing and researching insurance coverage issues for the CC. COMPLETED.
- **Matt Braddock** will lead an opening exercise at the March CC meeting. COMPLETED.
- **Marjorie Hoffman and Jackie Lowery** will discuss with Alison how Justice and Witness can best support and promote the activities of Stewards of the Earth/Green Team within CCC and with the broader community, and will update the CC at the March meeting. COMPLETED.

**Adjournment & Prayer**

Kathie adjourned the meeting at 8:40 pm and Matt Braddock led the group in a closing prayer.

Respectfully submitted by Sarah Ingram, Church Clerk.

Attachment:
Monthly Engagement Area Summaries
Congregational Assets

Monthly Summary:

Member Loans

The 1099-Int forms were mailed out in late December. At the same time, renewal letters were sent out to the loans which come due 2021. These loans were all for the Retreat Center. By the end of January, we received confirmation that the members wanted to renew the loans for an additional two years at an interest rate of 1.5%. I received positive responses from all but one person, who has a loan of $5,000. I will contact him again to learn his intentions.

Retreat Center

Given the status of COVID, we will continue to coordinate/supervise rentals to family/bubble units ONLY for the mid-March through August timeframe. We will continue to use the CCC provided COVID agreements and contact tracing procedures we used in the fall with more specific directions for more thorough completion of forms. Sue Dollins and other committee members will continue to rotate checking on the property between rentals. In April/May, we will re-evaluate with the CCC COVID-19 Team/Council/Staff the potential for fall programming at the Retreat Center before opening rentals to family units for the fall. An announcement about the opportunity for spring/summer rentals will go out to the congregation and the RC Facebook page the beginning of February. Anticipated rental income for spring/summer rentals is $7,000.

March 12-14 is our anticipated opening work retreat. Most likely we will need to stagger the volunteers and limit the participation due to COVID-19, not having more than 10 people at any one time. This is how we conducted the fall closing and work retreats, which were still very productive.

Jackie Walters and Kristen are working on re-vitalizing the “Friends of the Retreat Center” to consolidate and update email/postal mail lists from over the years. This will provide an efficient email list to support the Retreat Center Committee for work retreats, special projects, rentals, programming and fundraising opportunities. Many people on the “Friends” list are not currently active with CCC for worship and pledging.

As you may know, the “ADA” path between buildings at the Retreat Center needs improvement. The value engineered blue stone path was thought to be a logical environmentally friendly surface choice at the time of construction. However, it has not held up to heavy rains thus causing erosion, which is now a safety hazard for everyone. Rick Sniffin is in the process of obtaining quotes to address the drainage issues and then resurface the path with asphalt. Once the cost of this project is known, we will be back in touch with the Council with a potential plan to address fundraising with the Friends of the Retreat
Center. In the meantime, there is mulch in storage which we will use to fill the eroded areas of the path. Or perhaps, mulching the entire path is a solution for the longer term, although not as accessible.

Facilities Issues

HVAC Replacement of Boiler Louver System

The Louver system to the right of the boiler has been malfunctioning again, with regularity. It was recently adjusted and lubricated by our Rommel tech, who reported it should hold for several weeks as we replace the system in February. Rommel has recommended a replacement as adjustments to keep the existing system operational are now not sustainable. This louver equipment opens and closes based on boiler activity. It closes when the boiler is not running. We are getting a custom 17 ¾ X 17 ¾ motor operator damper. Because this is a custom part, there is a 4 week lead time. Install is not anticipated until mid to late February.

HVAC PM

The PM has been completed. It was during this recent PM that the Louver problem was discovered. Thermostats in the building have been set for 70 degrees F. for 24/7 until we are beyond the severe cold expected this February. We will revisit weather conditions mid-February and adjust thermostats as needed.

HVAC We are reviewing recommendations from Rommel USA, HVAC contractor, on auxiliary heat for the mechanical room during extreme cold.

Rommel has specified a 7.5 KW Electric United Heater to be mounted by the recently installed fresh air fan near the hot water heaters and to the left of the boiler. This is near the section of pipes that burst during the 2014 polar vortex and which subsequently flooded the mechanical room. This install requires a new breaker into the electrical panel and install of a MC cable to the new heater unit. The heater will work off a thermostat as needed, adjusted for minimal heat to protect mechanical room equipment vulnerable to extreme cold. The heater heats the space when the dampers are open letting cold air into the room. Dampers are open when the boiler is operational.

IT/Technology

We replaced the UPS box at the church office computer station. Half of the former box was malfunctioning, an age related problem.

Grease Trap System clean-out

A clean out of the grease trap system has been scheduled for this coming Wednesday, February 3rd at 10 am. Peter Karl will cover the maintenance. Daycare has been notified and this is a timeframe the Center can manage. The clocks and blades/parts in the traps were serviced in December by GK & L, the system’s manufacturer. Rommel Inc. will do the maintenance.

Security Issues/ Security Lapses

There continue to be some security lapses with our tenants. Each is recorded daily and we bring these to the attention of our tenants. If patterns and lapses persist, we will need to address them as an action item. Items include lobby doors not locked and secured at the end of the day and some internal rooms not locked and secured.
External check of windows

We are scheduling external checks of windows on 1st and 2nd floors several times a week and Saturdays to check for open windows. Dave Gayer will continue checking occupied room windows daily, as a part of the daily security check/closing evening task. We found a window open in the Sr. Minister’s office, Saturday, 1/23. We reviewed security camera footage and there were no persons other than those expected in the facility at various times. We are going forward with these additional checks 4 times weekly for those spaces not routinely accessed on a routine basis.

Inauguration

The church campus was closed and secured with the lot coned off for the Inauguration. An undercover FBI team was on the lot the afternoon of 1/8, the Friday following the 1/6 assault of the US capitol. UCC headquarters advised all UCC churches to close. With the new Homeland Security notice, we have advised tenants to keep a watch for unusual activity and to contact the Administrator immediately with any concerns. We do not expect any issues or developments, but out of an abundance of caution have advised our tenants to continue to be vigilant.

COVID

Springwell School positive Covid Diagnosis.

A student was diagnosed with Covid and following Health Department guidelines, the school was closed for the Health Department quarantine time frame guidelines. There were no further infections among the school population.

• Submitted by John Gipson

Congregational Giving

Monthly Summary:
I have reached out to members of the solicitation committee for last year and am asking for assistance again. I have a short list of a few others who I would like to add to the committee for this upcoming year and intend to reach out to them in the next week.

Future Activities:
In mid-February, we hope to have an organizing meeting to determine the schedule for the year, tasks and assignments, and to brainstorm names of additional volunteers.

Volunteer Needs:
We are always looking for new volunteers! Pledging season is coming up so any new Coordinating Council members who are willing to help, please let me know!

• Submitted by Kevin Sturtevant

Justice and Witness

Monthly Summary:
The Racial Justice Circle agreed to convene a book study, in mid-Feb into the spring, focused on the book \textit{Caste} by Isabel Wilkerson. Sandi will host it on her Zoom account; Dan said he also could.

**Future Activities:**
Thursday, Feb. 4, 7:00PM Potomac Association MD J&W Action team briefing open to all CCC members (including high school students).

Book study of "Caste: The origins of Our Discontent" by Isabel Wilkerson for Black History Month - dates to be determined

- \textit{Submitted by Marjorie Hoffman}

**Member Care & Fellowship**

**Monthly Summary**

- January 2- Reviewed and revised Member Care and Fellowship Budget for Because We Care library materials and workshop honoraria. Reallocated funds from "Greeters" and "Coffee Time" allowances.
- January 4- Planning for the congregational meeting with the Coordinating Council focused on "Chat With the Moderator".
- January 4- Coordinating Council monthly meeting
- January 6- Meeting with Edelson, National Wildlife Federation on January 31 event to announce collaboration, relaunch CCC Green Team.
- January 6- Consulted with African American Women in Ministry, Potomac Association, Strategic initiatives for 2021.
- January 8- Clergy Community of Practice worship and fellowship, Central Atlantic Conference.
- January 9-Memorial Service, Family of Richard Myers, including Esposito family and Brown family.
- January 9-Release service and worship to bid farewell to Central Atlantic Conference ACM, Rev. Dr. Audrey Price to Southern New England Conference.
- January 11- Consulted with Barbara Callander about virtual performances on the national suffrage movement "Celebrate Women Winning the Vote" UCC Pacific Northwest Conference.
- January 13- Plan/organized MLK Observance for post worship event with Rev. Darryl! Moch, Central Atlantic Conference.
• January 14- Consulted with Seneca Valley UCC and Central Atlantic Conference to promote MLK Observance across Conference. Pastor Matt contacted Potomac Association for posting to the Potomac Association's Facebook to invite a wider audience to participate with CCC. Well attended; post survey with excellent ratings.

• January 16- Annual Retreat for Coordinating Council.

• January 17- MLK Worship Service, with Pastor Matt preaching a historical, culturally competent perspective on the life and theology of MLK, contrasted with contemporary movements and events. Ingrid Baynes sang movement songs "A Change is Gonna Come" and "People Get Ready", accompanied by Sam Wack.; Ifeanyi DaSilva served as liturgist. Recorded music featured other artists including songstress/musician activist Nina Simone.


• January 18- Consulted with Kathie McConnell, Moderator, processing CC Retreat, direction for MC&F and strategic development of Member Care and Fellowship goals.

• January 24--Coordinating Council for "Chat With the Moderator". Having received no questions or topics of interest prior to this meeting, CC members introduced themselves and shared on current projects. Two church members asked if they could attend monthly meetings. Kathie McConnell extended the invitation to attend and get more involved in the work and service of CCC.

• January 25-Consulted with Alison Petersen on Green Team Relaunch.

Future Activities:

• January 31-Workshop, Sligo Creek/ Sacred Grounds and Relaunch Green Team, as we release Jim Conklin from this leadership and Alison Petersen assumes the role of leading the Green Team. There will be a new partnership with the National Wildlife Federation and other Jewish and Christian congregations involved in environmental solutions.

• February 3 – BWC Steering Committee Meeting

• February 7 – BWC Grief Workshop and Presenter. Repeats on February 10. Watch for details in weekly eBlasts.

• February 14- Children’s Workshop, Kumbaya Kids learning about rhythm and movement for Black History Month. Family fun, all ages encouraged!

• February 17- Ash Wednesday- Begins Lenten Season. Epiphany season ends.

• February 21- New Member Informational meeting. Share names of returning visitors with cccoffice@cccsilverspring.org so they can be personally invited.
• February 28- Rev. Aubra Love, preaching, as close of Black History Month. Morning Worship Service. Text: Genesis 17:1 "When Abram was ninety-nine years old, God appeared to Abram, and said to him, 'I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be thou perfect." Come and explore with me as I speak on the subject of Tall Order! Or Divine Blessing?"

• March 14 – Health and Wellness workshop after worship.

• March 14 – New Member Joining Sunday.

Volunteers!

Need Greeters for online virtual worship services. Show up 15 minutes early and welcome others to the Sunday service. May commit for as little as once monthly. Special invitation to less visible membership, under 35 years of age, persons of color, LGBTQIA2 self-identifying, differently abled, non-native English speakers. MC&F vows to never contribute to the invisibility of any of our membership and visitors. STEP UP, please!

• Submitted by Rev. Aubra Love

Spiritual Formation

Monthly Summary:
Church School -- Lindsay continues to share her wonderful newsletter filled with information about the curriculum we would be following in in-person church school so parents can have access to creative ideas to keep their kids engaged in the church calendar. And as a reminder, she has created a secure Facebook Group for CCC Church School to help families stay connected. Thank you Lindsay for all you do!

CYM -- John continues to meet regularly with the youth through weekly Zoom meetings to stay . For this semester, he is meeting separately with middle school kids at one time, and high school kids at another time so he can offer lessons tailored to each age group. It's great that our youth have these opportunities to stay connected during the pandemic. Thank you John for all you do!

• Submitted by Geri Brennon

Worship and the Arts

Monthly Summary:
The Keep Singing! group continues to meet via Zoom every Thursday evening at 7:30pm.

Future Activities:
Music plans for the Easter Sunday service include an organist, trumpeter and 6 singers. We will be using the new equipment purchased for the best sound possible.

• Submitted by Leslie Weyn