Christ Congregational Church  
Silver Spring, Maryland  
Minutes of the Coordinating Council  
January 4, 2021  
[Gathered by video conference due to Covid-19 restrictions.]  

Present:  
Kathie McConnell (Moderator)  
Paul Scribner (Moderator Elect)  
Matthew Braddock (Senior Minister)  
Geri Brennan (Spiritual Formation)  
Jack Doggett (At-Large)  
Peyton Ferrier (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)  
Leslie Weyn (Worship & the Arts)  

Call to Order and Review of Agenda  
Kathie McConnell, Moderator, called the Coordinating Council (CC) meeting to order at 7:07 pm and reviewed the meeting agenda.  

Approval of the December 7, 2020 Coordinating Council Minutes. Kathie asked for any comments or corrections; hearing none, she asked for a motion to approve the minutes. John Gipson so moved, Leslie Weyn seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.  

Sarah Ingram thanked the CC members for their prompt action on the December 28, 2020, eVote concerning the setting of the 2021 interest rate for member loans.  

Moved, that the annual interest rate on member loans be changed to 1.5% for member loans renewing during calendar year 2021.  

John Gipson made the motion and Sarah seconded. Sarah distributed the motion by email to the CC, with background on data and reasoning. On the same day, a quorum was reached and the motion approved with thirteen for, none opposed, and one abstention.  

Sarah also reported on the status of the SBA Payroll Protection Program, following a communication from CCC’s lender SunTrust Bank about the December 2020 legislation. For the existing PPP loan, SunTrust recommended that borrowers wait to apply for forgiveness until the SBA can revise the regulations and forms (and banks conform their online materials). Sarah
shared that due to the generosity of CCC’s members and friends, the church will not qualify for a “second draw” loan.

**Calendar Review.** Kathie reminded everyone that the CC Retreat will be held via zoom on January 16, 2020 from 9:30 am to noon. A key topic will be “what we will look like when we are together” or “who do we want to be as a church”. It was also flagged that March 14th will be Stewardship Sunday.

**Updates on Programs, Activities, Events**

**Chat with the Moderator.** Kathie reminded the CC that she has set up five monthly “Chat with the Moderator” sessions (January-May), and asked that CC members attend as many as possible. She has asked the congregation for questions in advance but, as usual, questions are likely to arise during discussions.

**Action Item:** Kathie McConnell will issue a “From Your Moderator” message that will include the invitation to the congregation for the “Chat with the Moderator” sessions. **COMPLETED (1/14/2021).**

**Nominations for FY 2021/2022.** In the absence of a Past-Moderator, Kathie reminded the group, the CC needs to plan for building an election slate for the June 2021 Annual Meeting. She is in the process of sorting out the terms prescribed in the Constitution and Bylaws. She asked each CC member to send an email to Kathie, Paul Scribner and Matt Braddock about whether the individual would be willing to renew their commitment and, if not, some possible names for their own replacement on the slate.

**Action Item:** By January 15th, each CC member to email Kathie, Paul and Matt about their own willingness to continue to serve on the CC and, if not, their suggestions for their own successor.

**Potomac Association Justice & Witness Committee Initiative.**

Marjorie Hoffman explained a special initiative launched by the Justice & Witness Committee of the Potomac Association (PAJW) and CCC’s current and potential roles. The PAJW is launching action groups in Virginia, D.C. and Maryland to increase focus on more local issues and/or actions targeting the local authorities, such as legislative sessions or law enforcement groups. The PAJW has provided $2,000 of seed money for each action group, which is to be comprised of representatives of as many local UCC churches as possible. Each action group, although holding the seed money, is to consider project/initiative ideas and propose one to the PAJW, which retains final sign-off on the idea and the expenditure.

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1 Marjorie has served on the PAJW Committee for some years but has reached her term limit. Jackie Lowery has agreed to replace Marjorie in that role.
During the last week of 2020, the PAJW asked a church in each jurisdiction to take fiduciary responsibility to hold the seed money for that area and assist in the initial recruitment of church representatives for that action group. After quick approval from the CCC moderators and senior pastor, CCC stepped up as fiduciary for the Maryland action group’s seed money and Marjorie has been busy communicating with Maryland churches about the initiative. For the Maryland action group, Marjorie is targeting all UCC churches in Maryland and all current ordained ministers, current church pastors, and lay leaders.

Marjorie and Jackie Lowery fielded questions from the group about the initiative, as well as suggestions for additional outreach to churches, pastors and lay leaders. The goal is to gain participation on the action group from as many churches as possible that also reflect the diverse communities they serve. The CC group agreed that this action group is an opportunity to facilitate and amplify voices and ideas that are often marginalized. Marjorie and Jackie emphasized that recruiting for the action group is critical for ensuring the raising of the best proposals, for informed and balanced voting on the group of proposals, and ensuring an effective initiative that meets inspires further activities.

**Focus Strategic Conversation**

**Budget Report and Discussion**

Dean Ripple shared that CCC needs to establish a fiscal direction and also how to manage through the next 3-4 years. Meanwhile, he provided highlights and observations about the financial report.

- **Giving.** Although Kevin Sturtevant’s team successfully shifted a number of givers from non-pledge plate giving to pledging in FY 2020/21, the non-pledge plate giving has continued to be above expectations. Dean wonders whether this is due to services being available through zoom and whether the giving trend can be sustained by how we design post-Covid operations.
- **Programs:** Dean reminded the Engagement Area Coordinators to look at their program money and consider how to use it in the next six months or bring it to the CC for re-programming.
- **Operations.** It continues to be true that CCC saves money while the building is closed and would lose money when the building re-opens. The budget assumption had been that the building would be closed 6 months but now the CC knows it will be 9-12 months. This generates two questions: what to do with the possibly extra cash on reserve during FY 2020/21 and how to not lose sight of the problem of operating at a loss once it reopens (whenever that is).
- **The Retreat Center (RC).** It appears that the RC can hold its own and is not a drag on the general CCC budget. Income from the fall paid all the interest on the member loans and with the longer rental season in 2021 the RC should be able to start paying down the principal on those loans.
Cash Flow. In light of the positive cash flow, the CC needs to establish policies about how money is to be used or reserved before the formulation of the next budget (spring 2021). Even earlier, the CC needs to think through how to craft an appropriate Stewardship message given (a) the cash position, (b) outstanding liabilities (PPP loan and last remaining loans on 9525 Colesville building), (c) anticipated big-ticket facilities costs for which there are no current reserves (HVAC, etc.), and (d) the huge needs in the broader community (especially given Covid impacts).

Dean and Kathie asked the group to give serious thought to how a growing cash pot should be applied and how to message stewardship in a few months. Further discussion included:

- the opportunity to finally establish a proper facilities reserve system to reduce future crisis management of the building, or at least reserve for the HVAC;
- the need for the CC and congregation to recognize this fiscal year as an anomaly when we received a PPP loan and had lower staff costs whereas in the future costs will go up and there will be no loan;
- the need to reduce outstanding debt (main building member loans and the unforgiven portion of the PPP loan);
- the philosophy that annual giving needs to be a commitment to the ongoing core activities of the church (in open status) and one-time extra cash should not be used on things like salaries and routine maintenance;
- the importance of not taking on a new multi-year commitment with one-year money (raised salaries, new staff, etc.);
- the desire to not pour all the money into the physical building;
- the opportunity to bulk up the Tate Endowment to increase its annual contribution to the Unified Budget into the future;
- the one-time opportunity to channel more support into the wider community (grants, projects, etc.);
- the need for personnel or equipment to support the kind of church CCC wants to be in months and years ahead;
- the balancing of short-term fixes, one-off actions, rainy-day funds, and future identity.

Finally, Dean also asked for guidance from the CC on the handling of the continued gifts made to support people whose work at the church has been impacted by Covid. The CC agreed with continuing the current methodology.

Wrap-Up and Review

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

- The new technology in the Sanctuary has created a lot of work for current staff, especially Matt, before and especially during services. Matt asked that a volunteer team be developed for operations and production.
• There was a zoom memorial service for Dick Meyers with immediate family in the Sanctuary, carefully planned with speakers, and other family and friends on zoom. There was positive feedback from the family and those on zoom.
• Covid Timeline. CCC has already extended the building closure through Easter but given the slow roll-out of vaccines, the 5-8 week effectiveness period from first shot to 95% immunity, the need to complete community herd immunity, etc., it is becoming clear that CCC may need to stay closed into the fall of 2021. CC needs to periodically consider the situation and timeline and keep the congregation informed and engaged.
• Nikki Brush is digging in to the website and redesigning it to support, among other things, the streaming of services and events directly from the website.

The CC discussed its desire to get the operations of the new technology off the plate of the clergy to enable them to focus on the content of their ministry rather than IT logistics. There was growing consensus that it would be most effective to use some current funds to hire some expertise to train a group of volunteers, rather than rely solely on available volunteers or lock into ongoing professional staff. The group discussed leads ranging from companies doing work for the UCC to university graduate students needing a temporary job.

**Action Item Review.**
• Kathie McConnell will issue a “From Your Moderator” message that will include the invitation to the congregation for the “Chat with the Moderator” sessions. COMPLETED (1/14/2021).
• By January 15th, each CC member to email Kathie, Paul and Matt about their own willingness to continue to serve on the CC and, if not, their suggestions for their own successor.

**Adjournment & Prayer**

Kathie adjourned the meeting and Matt Braddock led the group in a closing prayer.

Respectfully submitted by Sarah Ingram, Church Clerk.

Attachment:
Monthly Engagement Area Summaries
Congregational Giving

Future Activities:
In January, we will start organizing for the upcoming season.

Volunteer Needs:
Always looking for new volunteers, especially to reach out to new members and non-members who have been attending online services.

Submitted by Kevin Sturtevant

Member Care & Fellowship

Monthly Progress:

● December 3- Central Atlantic Mass Choir Rehearsal-- December 27th, Christmas Sunday Worship.

● December 6- Preparing/Submitting MC&F Engagement Area monthly report

● December 7- Coordinating Council Monthly Meeting

● December 13- New Members Joining Sunday. Three new members welcomed: Mel Black, Leeann Irwin, and Lee Sislen.

● December 14- Health and Wellness consult with Kerri Hufford; Two remaining workshops.

● H&W Workshop January 10th.

● December 18- Potomac Association African American Women In Ministry/ Planning and theme "JOY" for Sister Circle Annual Christmas Gathering.

● December 22- Meeting with Pastor Matt to consult on forward direction of Member Care and Fellowship, involving Because We Care, Health and Wellness Ministry, Childcare (currently inactive), Fellowship Small Groups and 5 Facilitators, New Member capacity building supports, Memorial reception readiness, Meals provision for members, Intentional ministry and support to Young Adults (who are parenting and
homeschooling through pandemic). Engaging multi-media approach to worship & liturgy. Also, the absence of Budget Presentations in the last two CC Meetings and improved communication among ministry initiatives. Upcoming Council Annual Retreat.

- December 29- Meeting to consult with Alison Petersen, status of Women's Social Hour, Contemporary Theology, Memorial Reception activity, Meals Provision for BWC contacts, Revitalization of the Green Team, (formerly Jim Conklin, Leader) new environmental project; Providing access and orientation to Breeze for new-hire Internet Specialist.

- December 30- Meeting on "Sacred Grounds" Project, with Alison Petersen, to engage congregations and families in an environmental campaign. Planning launch content, format for leaders and facilitators.

BECAUSE WE CARE:

- December 2- BWC Steering Committee Meeting, discussed presence on CCC website and update.

- Ten BWC members supported 15 members. Some involved multiple contacts.

- Forty notes and cards were sent to membership with a variety of needs.

- Betsy Thomas and Susan Gray connecting with those who are bereaved over the last period.

- "Speaking Grief", facilitated by Jim Rossi, will be held in two sessions in January; one session on Sunday, the other on Wednesday. Anticipated dates Sunday, January 24 or 31; and Wednesday January 20th or 27th. Brad Sperber and Karen O'Steen working together with facilitator to confirm dates, session content and needed support.

- Next BWC meetings-January 6th and February 3rd. at 10:00AM.

Health and Wellness Ministry:

- Last workshop "Living With More Joy", with Paul Scribner, was well received.

- Next workshop is January 10th, with Ifeanyi Da Silva and Paul Scribner. Will be an opportunity to reflect on 2020 and look ahead, over lunch and laughter. Workshop will feature breakouts, allowing for more connection and small group interaction.

- Final workshop for this church calendar is expected for March 14th, featuring Ifeanyi Da Silva's healthy cooking tips.

- AED Certificate was renewed for two years, all pads/battery are up to date. Sam Wack maintains monthly checks.

- Details are being discussed for proposed yoga and fitness studio offerings, as a wellness extension.
● Health Bulletin e-blasts tips will continue.

Future Activities
● January 10 - Health and Wellness Workshop
● January 16 - Upcoming Coordinating Council Annual Retreat.
● January or February, (TBD) - "Sacred Grounds" Project, to engage congregations and families in environmental campaigns and small group initiatives.
● January (TBD), Sunday and Wednesday - "Speaking Grief", facilitated by Jim Rossi, will be held in two sessions
● January 6 - BWC Steering Committee Meeting
● February 3 - BWC Steering Committee Meeting
● February 21 - New Member Informational Meeting
● March 14 - Health and Wellness workshop, after worship
● March 14 - New Member Joining Sunday

Volunteer Needs
"Poetry isn't a profession, it's a way of life. It's an empty basket; you put your life into it and make something out of that." Pulitzer Prize winning poet, Mary Jane Oliver (one of my faves) Now, I am going to borrow this description and say this same thing about ministry and service to the church. "It's a way of life. An empty basket; you put your soul into it and allow the Creator to make something out of that." When all else has passed away, service and preaching will likely remain...

Submitted by Rev. Aubra Love

Spiritual Formation

Monthly Summary
To be submitted by Geri Brennon during the meeting or before the next Council call.

Worship and the Arts
Monthly Summary:
With the technical expertise of Pastor Matt and John Ahn, 6 singers, 2 instrumentalists, and Sam Wack were able to put together Christmas Music Sunday and Christmas Eve musical offerings for the congregation. A special thank you to Dave Ackerman, Ingrid Baynes, Rick Brush, Teri Brush, Spencer Clark, Karen O'Steen, Megan Repoley, Brad Spencer, Lynne Joseloff,
and Will Joseloff for their time and energy during rehearsals and for the services. We appreciate all their efforts!

**Future Activities:**

Keep Singing! will resume on January 7, 2021 and continue to meet weekly on Thursday evenings at 7:30pm.

Submitted by Leslie Weyn

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**Congregational Assets**

**Congregational Assets Report - December 2020**

Silver Spring Child Care Center:

The child-care center resumed operation November 30 after being closed for two weeks because a staff member got COVID-19.

Springwell School:

The school asked, if possible, for adjustments to be made to the hvac system that would separate air filtration by floor. Initial discussions with Rommel indicated this isn’t likely and would be expensive, but they will review plumbing and hvac mechanicals and give us a brief assessment – not putting much time into the effort. It is not likely this is achievable with the current system and this type of capability would be best addressed in a future hvac system overhaul with boiler replacement.

Monthly Tenant meeting. John Gipson held the first monthly zoom meeting with both tenants. The meetings are scheduled for the second Wednesday. The purpose is to improve communication between all of the parties.

Christ Congregational Church Property: Dianne Abraham, Church Administrator

Water monitor installs – A Pension Board requirement. We have all monitors in. Plumb Square will install in January.

Preventive Maintenance:

- Ames Inc. completed a sump pump test and inspections. All sump pump systems functioning fine – no repair or replacement issues. Next PM is Spring 2021.
- Roof gutters clean out completed. Roof inspection completed. Repair to the flat roof over office for recurring leaks was completed. Office ceiling tile that was stained was replaced. Billing not yet received from Plumb Square contractors. This is a routine roof maintenance effort – autumn/early winter once all leaves are down and late spring once trees are leafed out.
- Grease Trap clean out and refill scheduled for January by Rommel Commercial Plumbing
- Boiler Inspection. Boiler passed inspection but recommendation received from inspector to shield new louver connection arrangements for the boiler which are close to the door to the chiller area and vulnerable.
Sprinkler System quarterly test and inspect scheduled for mid-January. Peter Karl will cover this maintenance. Dave Gayer will back Peter up if there are scheduling difficulties that arise.

Repairs

- Recurring thermostat troubles in two daycare rooms. Rooms 003 and 004 were not heating in December cold weather. Thermostat wiring was disconnected due to age and heavy use. Rommel tech rewired stat connections for the short term. Stat will be replaced with late winter PM. Rewiring effort should hold until then. This is one of the few remaining original thermostats from renovation.
- Replaced failed exhaust fan in mechanical room. Exhaust fan required for hot water heaters summer operation had failed. Tech has it closed off for the winter and will reactivate with spring PM. Plenty of air is circulating in the mechanical room this winter so the additional air from this unit is not needed in winter months.
- Electrical connections to the boiler were broken in November by individual(s) accessing the mechanical room door to the chiller area. Signage is now up that this door is not in use – all chiller access must be via the social hall kitchen door. Custodians, facility volunteers and contractors informed.
- Painting Repairs. Daycare requested a repaint of portions of the classroom wall in room 003. Plumb Square took care of peeling paint issues hours before Christmas. Plumb Square is also scheduled to take care of the worst peeling paint in the central stair of the church off the lobby.
- Plumbing emergency, Basement Ladies Room. Daycare child using the toilet (in the ladies room off the lobby), flushed the toilet, and water started gushing. Peter Karl came over to turn off water; Daycare Director reported instructions from a former event in the daycare hallway were not working and she could not get the water off. Restroom flooded, but water did not flow into the lobby. Daycare staff mopped up water. Rommel Plumber was out the same day and Dave Gayer provided access and covered the maintenance call. Entire flushing mechanism needed replacement. Full repair was made the next day. This happened the week of Christmas. This is the second full hardware replacement this year to toilets used by daycare children.

Repeated shutdowns with emergency generators. Trouble with the generator was finally correctly assessed and the generator is repaired and operational. The oil filter sensor was replaced and connections rewired. Fuel system check valves, fuel lines and associated clamps were replaced. Proper operational status confirmed with several test runs. We should be beyond the shut-down issues. Dave Gayer is keeping an eye on the generator after the weekly Wednesday evening runs to confirm the generator is resetting properly. We do not anticipate trouble over the New Year holiday weekend.

Submitted by John Gipson
Justice and Witness

Monthly Summary:

The Potomac Association is organizing three regional Potomac Association UCC Justice and Witness Steering Committees in the DMV area. The purpose of the committees (one each in DC, Maryland, and Virginia) is to provide a structure for UCC churches to work together to address justice and witness issues primarily through their respective legislatures. An organizing retreat was held on December 3 and 4 in which over 40 people participated. The Maryland group chose to focus on criminal justice reform in general and specifically police reform, and relief for COVID-19 victims. Marjorie Hoffman, Anne Weisenborn, and Jim Henkleman-Bahn represented CCC at the retreat.

krma-USPartners - CCC made a contribution to krma-USPartners for children in Kobulubulu, Uganda. This donation will primarily be used to supplement the expenses of University student Patricia Agwelo who is currently living with family members in Kampala (where there is wi-fi access) in order to continue her education. If funds are available, two high school scholarship students, Margaret and Patricia, will also receive aid.

Racial Justice Circle - The Racial Justice Circle and other CCC volunteers continued its postcarding drive to get out the vote. The most recent effort, led by Sandi Zeese and Marjorie Hoffman, focused on reaching out to 18-23 young people in Georgia to encourage them to register and then vote in the January 5, 2021 Georgia Senatorial run-off election.

Future Activities:

Potomac Association - The next activity for the Potomac Association J&W initiative is a Zoom meeting on January 9, from 8:30-11:30am. In break-out groups, participants will organize a steering committee for each region, and then discuss how to proceed on each of the regional campaigns, including narrowing the issues to be pursued and identifying the knowledge and strategies to address them. CCC members are urged to participate in the meeting and should contact Marjorie Hoffman for additional information.

UCC Palestine/Israeli Network
The following are upcoming webinars on the Israel/Palestine issue through mid-February:
1/5/2021 10:00 AM: Register for webinar information
Webinar, “Unfinished Business: Why the United Kingdom Must Now Recognise the State of Palestine”
Featuring: Dr. Ardi Imseis, an Assistant Professor of Law, Faculty of Law, Queen’s University
For more info: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_m2Le7gbLQECurKu0bbGoog
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1/18/2021 7:00 PM: TBD
EDoW Holy Land Committee meeting
For more info: tojo@att.net
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2/10/2021 10:00 AM: Register for webinar information
Webinar, "Arabella Dorman on The Audacity of Hope"
Featuring: Arabella Dorman, an award winning war artist and one of Britain’s leading portrait painters, shortlisted for the Art+Christianity Award and internationally acclaimed in raising global awareness about the consequences of war, forced displacement of people and human trafficking
For more info: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_X6dOcRs_SrKoiIKCDmdndg

Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform (MAJR)
MAJR is supporting the overturn of three vetoes by Governor Hogan. With about two weeks from the beginning of the legislative session in Annapolis on January 13th, legislators will vote to override the Governor’s veto of bills which passed both houses of the Assembly. These votes will take place early in January at the beginning of the legislative session. The bills are:
(1) Blueprint for Maryland's Future (HB1300/SB1000), which implements the substantial public education reforms suggested by the Kirwan Commission.
(2) Women’s Pre-release Facility (HB801/SB684), which would help the women in Maryland prisons benefit from employment and reentry services.
(3) Automatic Expungement (HB83/SB699)(HB1336/SB589), which would clear the records of our returning citizens who were imprisoned for misdemeanors that today would not entail a prison sentence.
Sixty percent of both Houses will be needed to override the veto. RJC will send a reminder out to CCC members to write or call their state legislators to support the override.

Submitted by Jacquelyn Lowery