

## Parish Council Minutes - February 25, 2015

In Attendance: Bruce Weaver, Barbara Langill, Kathi Martin, Dotty Whittier, Margaret Waugh, Chuck Cotting, Debbie Cotting, and Rev. Dennis Bailey.

Moderator, Bruce Weaver convened the meeting at 7:08 P.M., and Kathi Martin offered the meditation. Council approved the minutes of the Jan. 7, 2015 meeting.

Pastor Report: Rev. Bailey reviewed pastoral concerns and worship-related activities. He performed a wedding on 2/15/15. He highlighted several upcoming events including the Marie Lucca workshop on 3/8, Brad Holt Remembrance on 3/15, Eagle Scout Court of Honor on 3/15, pictures with the Easter Bunny on 3/21, and Stewardship Sunday on 3/22. Doug Hodgkins will be away with the High School Chorus on Palm Sunday, March 29. The Easter Service in the Sanctuary will feature the choir's Easter Cantata. There will also be an Easter Sunrise Service at Newhall Park. Rev. Bailey gave Council members a list of some of the newer folks who have been attending services and encouraged everyone to get to know these new friends.

Financial Reports: Treasurer, Jeff Law was unable to attend the meeting, but he provided Council with data through 1/31/15 and reviewed his report via telephone. He noted that our overall loss in the Operating Fund year-to-date is \$37,196.48 which is \$2,909.80 better than last year and \$39,390.31 better than budget. Income year-to-date is \$15,432.87 better than last year and \$33,651.03 better than budget. Pledges largely caught up in December (now \$2462.77 worse than last year, but \$4612.36 better than budget.) The Supplemental Pledge Drive brought in \$31,875 through January-all unbudgeted. Expenses are \$12,523.07 worse than last year, but \$5739.28 better than budget. The variance versus last year is mostly due to paying the Supply Minister in July and August of this fiscal year; we did not have that expense in July and August of the prior fiscal year. Jeff noted several items to watch: Make sure pledges stay up-to-date and Supplemental contributions continue, Continue fundraising efforts, Maintain good expense management. In the Memorial Fund, there are funds which are undesignated. Rev. Bailey was able to contact 6 of the 8 families involved, and they all said we should use the funds at our discretion. Council voted to move those funds (\$565.00) to Capital Maintenance.

Christian Education: Barbara Langill reported that the church school will begin using the Godly Play curriculum on March 8. Based on the Montessori Method, Godly Play uses a careful telling of scripture stories, engaging story figures, and activities to encourage children to seek and find answers to their faith questions. Kristin DiFillipo attended Godly Play training and will be the lead teacher/storyteller. The Godly Play room is set up in the stage area of Todd Hall. Godly Play will be an inclusive classroom for children ages 4 and up. Twenty-five Godly Play stories were purchased at a discounted price from Salem Tabernacle Church. Beginning March 8, children will begin in worship and leave for Godly Play after Children's Time. The Christian Ed team would like to establish an area in the Sanctuary where children (with a parent) can move around and engage in some quiet activities if they find it difficult to sit still. They proposed removing the back pew on the right side to make room for a small table and seating for children and parents. Council, while understanding the benefits of having the young children in worship at the beginning of the service, was reluctant to vote on removing a pew. Council decided to table the discussion until the next meeting to give more time to consider the proposal. It was then suggested that Barbara and Kathi, along with other Council members, visit the Sanctuary after the meeting to determine if there was another appropriate space that would not require removing a pew. (Note: As a result of the Sanctuary visit, it was decided to set up an area in the space behind the first pews on the right and left sides and see how that works.) Church School children and families will make and sell Heifer Muffins during Lent. The Youth Group snow-tubing trip was cancelled due to one of our many snowstorms. Instead, they will go to Sky Zone Trampoline Park at the Liberty Tree Mall on March 1. On Feb. 18, 4 High School youth made more than 50 sandwiches and delivered them to the Boston Warm Center at Old South Church in Boston. They brought 20+

hygiene bags made up from donations from the congregation along with socks, hats, gloves, and back packs. They met with Dylan from City Mission Society who spoke to the group about the services provided to the homeless by the Boston Warm Center. On March 14, both Youth Groups will volunteer at Cradles to Crayons and bring gently used children's clothing they will collect in Feb. Barbara anticipates a total of 12 participants for the 4/18-24 Mission Trip to Heifer Ranch in Arkansas. The estimated cost per person is \$950.00. She noted that usually families pay 1/3, Missions contributes 1/3, and fundraisers account for the final 1/3. But, this year there is a healthy balance in the Youth Group Fund, left over from prior fundraisers. Barbara recommended using money from the fund rather than holding more fundraisers, and Council agreed. She requested \$4200 from Missions to support the trip, and Council approved the request. Jill DiGiorgio and Lauren Donadio have volunteered to lead the Cherub Choir-the emphasis will be on rhythm and movement.

Membership: Dotty Whittier reported that 85 people attended the Trivia/Silent Auction night and over \$4300 was raised for the church. "Pictures with the Easter Bunny" is scheduled for 3/21/15; thanks to the Priestleys for the being the official photographers. Membership will help the flea market and bake sale on May 16. Membership is exploring other fellowship and fundraising events for spring.

Diaconate: Margaret Waugh spoke about the all church Lenten Workshop presented by Rev. Maria Lucca following the service on March 8. Lunch will be provided. Child care will be provided. The program will highlight the historical events that have impacted the beliefs and spiritual beliefs of each generation. Changing worship preferences will be explored as well as communication styles and volunteer inclinations. Rev. Lucca will offer suggestions for making Centre Congregational Church more welcoming to younger demographics. Because Easter falls on the first Sunday of April, Communion has been scheduled for Palm Sunday, March 29. Gluten-free and nut-free crackers are available during communion-several people took advantage of the option last month. The Diaconate has received instruction on turning on the amplification system. Jeff Law developed an instruction sheet which is kept in the control room. Diaconate will not provide an Easter Breakfast this year.

Stewardship: Carrie Pericola provided a written report. She noted that the Rock the Boat supplemental drive has raised \$33,055.00 as of 2/8/15. The Stewardship Campaign will begin on March 1 and end on March 22 with a celebration lunch.

Finance: Chuck Cotting reported that Joe Hill and his roofing crew were hired to remove snow on the roofs over the administration offices, rear entrance, and side entrance near the chapel. They also cut channels in ice dams and removed most large icicles to reduce water leaks and potential damage. Water from ice dams traveled inside the back office wall, through the library closet, into the basement near the freezer. This area will be monitored closely until the roof is clear. Quick action by Rev. Bailey and the custodian to empty the closet and put barrels in place to catch the water saved us from any major damage. There is a huge icicle hanging from the office roof. Plywood panels were placed over the windows below the icicle to protect them.

Fundraising: Council discussed plans for May 16, 2015. Geraniumfest and Field Day will be held at the Middle School. The church will host "Crafters on the Common" and a flea market. The Friends of the Library will hold their used book sale on that day, and the Art Guild is holding a show at the Meeting House. Rev. Bailey has been in touch with Arthur Bourque of Townscape to coordinate efforts. The group organizing church events has met once and will meet again on March 4. Margaret Waugh and Debbie Cotting are organizing the Craft Show, and Dotty Whittier and Barbara Langill are heading up the Flea Market.

There being no further business, Council voted to adjourn the meeting at 9:25 P.M. Rev. Bailey led a closing prayer. - Respectfully submitted, Debbie Cotting, Recording Secretary

**Next Meeting: Tuesday, March 31 at 7 P.M. Meditation: Carrie Pericola**