

**UNION CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
COMMON MINISTRY  
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF JULY 16, 2020**

**Present:**

**Absent:**

Pastors	Bridget Flad Daniels Jon Pahl		
Moderator	Sandy Polarek		
Vice Moderator	Heather Collins		
Treasurer	Jeff Gibson		
Clerk	Gail Hohenstein		
Education	Nancy Gibson		
Gifts & Memorials	Nicole Polarek	Phil Enscoe	
Inreach & Membership	Denise Olson		
Outreach	Achim Siefert	Christie Reese	
Stewardship		Clay Reese	
Worship	Betty Bienash		
Communications Coordinator		Avonelle Weist	
Guest(s)			

Meeting held via Zoom.

Moderator Sandy Polarek called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

**Additions to the Agenda:**

**Congregational Joys and Concerns:** Joys and concerns were shared.

**Gathering Prayer:** Sandy offered a poem.

**Open Forum:** None.

**Ministers' Reports:** Bridget shared that Dr. Charles Smith's funeral was Saturday. She also noted that it has been a much busier summer than normal.

Jon will be on vacation 8/2-8. The Brain Center is still out of the building. He is involved in planning 3 events at Mauthe Center through GIFT this fall with the theme Rivers of Faith". He attended an online Jazz Ministry webinar in which he presented what we had done and got some feedback. The remainder of grant needs to be expended by November 1. The team will find ways to steward the funds in a good way.

**Clerk's Report**

Approval of the minutes for the regular meetings of February 13, March 12, April 2 and June 11 as well as the Special Meeting of March 19 were approved. (Heather/Achim)

**Treasurer's Report**

Jeff distributed the regular financial report (attached). We continue to receive both pledge and non-pledge income at higher rates than we expect, but that may balance out at the end of the year. Room rental income is down. We don't know how limited operations will impact that income over the fall. Approved. (Denise/Achim)

**New Business**

- **Joshua Community Book Read:** Prison Reform Task Force is proposing the community focus on housing issues, which is a growing problem. They are recommending a group read of Evicted, with a panel discussion with experts to discuss as a community event. Housing Task Force would also be involved.

**Continuing Business**

- **Priorities & Budget Update-Financial Secretary Proposal:** All surveys of church and ministry teams have been completed. The team is working on ranking priorities and will be discussing with appropriate ministry teams in about September. They are still planning on another report in August. Heather reviewed and discussed the Financial Secretary

proposal (attached). The hope is to hire a new financial secretary by the end of September to allow for training with Winnie in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter. A revised job description has been written. Bridget has contacted Personnel Committee to review the proposal with them.

• **Reopening the Building Task Force Updates:**

- **Outside Use:** No policy updates. Dyslexia clinic is working well and has expressed gratitude for the protocols in place. Bridget has shared the protocols with Mayflower and advised them they need to draft what protocols would be appropriate for their use for review/approval by Common Ministry a minimum of 4 business days before a regularly scheduled Common Ministry meeting. Mayflower hopes to have classes in the fall, but are waiting for the schools' protocols. The Brain Center has not yet given Union proof of insurance.
- **Worship:** Betty reviewed the recommendations for return to worship and the funeral policy (both attached). After discussion the recommendation and policy were approved with one minor revision. (Gail/Heather).
- **Technology:** Jeff reported the group (Clay Reese, Jeff Gibson, Shaun Shouldeen and Eric Harkoff) have conceptually designed the system. It would involve 3 cameras and a switching system with a focus on being simple to operate. It would be installed near the audio system in the balcony. Shaun is working on the equipment details. A member of the congregation has offered to underwrite up to \$8,000 of the cost. Motion to move forward to ordering necessary equipment with a maximum of \$8,000 approved (Jeff/Betty).

**Ministry Reports (unless covered in Ministry meeting minutes)**

EDUCATION

No report.

GIFTS & MEMORIALS

No report.

MEMBERSHIP & INREACH

Working on something for new members and some virtual activities to keep people together.

OUTREACH

Blessing Box is in place. Donations have come in and it has been stocked. Paper, hygiene products, masks have gone quickly. Thanks to Bill Johnson and Anne Rakow-Weist for construction and painting of the box. We have collected about \$1,000 for We All Rise. 4 groups have or will provide lunch at the Micah Center.

STEWARDSHIP

No report.

WORSHIP

No report.

**Communications:** No report.

**Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn was approved. After prayer, the meeting was adjourned at 7:30 pm (Jeff/Denise).

Respectfully submitted,

Gail Hohenstein  
Clerk

Next meeting: August 13 2020 – 6:00 PM -- Zoom

Future Schedule:

Common Ministry Meetings	Gathering Prayer	Treats
August 13	Bridget	Sandy
September 10	Betty	Gail
October 8		Christie/Clay
November 12		Nancy
December 10		Heather
January 14		Bridget

**Union Congregational UCC  
Treasurer's Report  
June 2020**

<u>Income</u>	<u>2020 Actual</u>	<u>2020 Budgeted</u>	<u>2019 Actual</u>
January	\$80,947	\$91,733	\$103,568
February	23,891	19,039	12,498
March	29,554	21,141	19,535
April	47,819	32,925	30,012
May	22,912	34,399	29,812
June	33,698	16,889	14,696
July	-	-	-
August	-	-	-
September	-	-	-
October	-	-	-
November	-	-	-
December	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$238,821</b>	<b>\$216,126</b>	<b>\$210,121</b>
 G&M Cont.	 \$25,000	 \$25,000	 \$25,000
 <b>Total Revenue</b>	 <b>\$263,821</b>	 <b>\$241,126</b>	 <b>\$235,121</b>
 PPP	 \$77,833		
 <b>Revenue w/PPP</b>	 <b>\$341,654</b>		
 <u>Expenses</u>	 <u>(thru June 30)</u>		
Actual:	\$241,840		
Budget:	\$264,690		
Last Year:	\$253,396		

**Comments:**

Pledge plus Non-pledge income through June exceeds our budgeted estimate by approximately \$33,000 and overall General Fund revenue exceeds our estimates by \$24,000. Declines in Loose Plate, Church School, Prior Year Pledges and Room Rentals account for the \$9,000 difference. Expenses are about \$23,000 below expected for the YTD. For the year Building Maintenance expenses are about \$1,200 under our estimate.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jeff Gibson, Treasurer

## Priorities and Budget Team

Members: Heather Collins, Bridget Flad-Daniels, Sandy Polarek, Jeff Gibson, Jeff Carels, Ryan Reith, Nicole Polarek, Betty Hartman, Susan Forsythe, Barbara McClure-Lukens

### Financial Secretary Position Proposal

The current Financial Secretary, Winnie Hutjens, has announced her planned retirement in early 2021. Winnie recommends to the group that a new person be hired in time to participate in a quarter end process and year end process. She feels that having the person on board by the end of September would ensure a smooth transition. She is also agreeable to reducing her hours as the new person can assume responsibilities.

The team focused on the following tasks:

- Review the responsibilities of both the financial secretary and the administrative secretary.
- Identify tasks that could move to volunteers.
- Consider two staffing models, one that maintains two employees and a second that would have a single employee.
- Outsource some or all of the financial secretary functions.
- Evaluate accounting functions to determine if they need to be executed by a staff member or if they could be done by others, including outsourcing.
- Gather input from financial and administrative staff to determine preferred and best practices, to help identify areas where duties could move from the financial secretary to the administrative secretary and tasks from either that could move to volunteers.
- Review the functionality of our current financial software including online giving.
- Evaluate the feasibility and efficacy of moving to an external online payroll system.
- Evaluate the desirability to move accounting functions to a web based platform, either with our current vendor or a different one.
- Develop new job descriptions.

Recommendations:

- Continue with two employees.
- Redefine tasks so that the administrative secretary takes on some of the more administrative tasks currently assigned to the financial secretary and move some routine tasks to volunteers.
- Move payroll function to PayChex online payroll service.
- The number of hours allocated to this position will be approximately 8 to 10 hours per week.
- The new financial secretary should begin working before the end of September, 2020.
- Continue to use our current server based accounting software, Church Windows. Reevaluate a possible move to a web based accounting product in approximately 3 years.
- Given the projected costs associated with this proposal, the group believes that the church budget will save between \$9,000 and \$10,000 annually.

July 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020

### **In-Person Worship Task Force Report to Common Ministry**

Task Force members: Betty Bienash, Heather Collins, Bridget Flad Daniels, Jeff Gibson, Steve Hartman,  
Sherry Warren

#### **Recommendations:**

- We will use Wisconsin's DHS guidelines and protocols as a phased-in plan to determine when we can reopen the church and how many people can come together as a congregation. We will be basing our decisions on the COVID-19 activity level in Brown County, as reported by DHS. We recommend 50 people or less may attend worship in person when we reach Phase 2 of the guidelines. Reopening the church will be a fluid process, since COVID-19 conditions may not remain stable. It will be important to convey this information to the congregation in accordance with our understanding of both compassion and extravagant welcome. We are also using Wisconsin Council of Churches, Wisconsin Conference UCC, Church Mutual, and CDC guidelines regarding houses of worship.
- Live stream services even as in person worship resumes.
- All attendees will be masked, with the exception of children and infants two and under. There will be health checks and sanitation stations at entry.
- Sanitation of the church, exact protocols still to be determined.
- Communication of what is expected when come on Sunday morning conveyed through email, newsletter, "This Week at Union Church", etc. with links to longer documents.
- Signage: standard COVID-19 signs regarding symptoms, etc.; directional signs for traffic flow; restroom hygiene reminders, etc..
- Music protocols: We will use safe options for presenting live music (solo or small ensemble) in service rather than eliminating or using recordings.
  - For hymn singing or special music (singer/wind instrumental player), we will be using a drum shield in front of the performer.
  - For congregational singing, we will print words in the bulletin for the congregation while listening to the cantor sing.
  - No choir, but the handbell choir and ukulele ensemble are possible. They will be masked. When the handbell choir or ukulele ensemble is playing, we will not place people in the first couple of rows to achieve extended social distancing.
  - Replaceable sponges used for microphones.
  - We will look into the cost of a projection screen and projector as well as the possibility of installation.
- Removal of everything from pews multiple people can touch (hymnals, friendship pads, etc.) .
- Delivering and removal of flowers and other decorations will follow current practices. Further decisions needed on seasonal items such as palms, etc.
- Funeral policy (see Funeral Policy for Union UCC During COVID-19)

**Under Consideration:**

- Wedding policy and Baptism policy under COVID-19.
- Seating and sign-up protocols, movement within church, protocols while in the building.
- Providing for children and their families within the worship service. Sherry Warren will be hosting Zoom focus group conversations with families to gather concerns and suggestions.
- Communion protocols.
- Determine how to address special services and events such as Christmas Eve, All Saints Day, Ecumenical Thanksgiving, Reunion Sunday, Christmas Pageant, Heifer Sunday, etc.
- Exact sanitation protocols.
- Protocols to follow if someone comes to church ill or becomes ill at church, if we learn someone has COVID-19 (contact tracing and communication to church body), if there are grievances, etc..
- Considerations for the more vulnerable members of our congregation (entry, exit, seating, etc.)
- Need for volunteers, ushers, etc. and training.
- Procedures for in-person attendance and offering.

**Recommendations for start up of other activities after in-person worship begins:**

- The in-person task force can continue to work directly with other ministries such as Education and Inreach and Membership as they begin to determine how to resume their programming under COVID-19. We can bring some of the information and guideline resources we have discovered as we are establishing procedures for in-person worship.

Proposal to Common Ministry  
Submitted by In-Person Worship Task Force  
Betty Bienash, Steve Hartman, Sherry Warren, Jeff Gibson, Bridget Flad-Daniels, Heather Collins

## FUNERAL POLICY FOR UNION CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST DURING COVID19

For Christians, gathering to mourn the dead, celebrate their life and proclaim the hope of resurrection are essential practices of our faith. During the extraordinary circumstances of the COVID19 outbreak, our usual mourning rituals have been interrupted. We think of those women on that first Easter, who went to follow their familiar mourning ritual to anoint Jesus's body, to find it disrupted. We remember their initial shock and confusion and feel it too. We're waiting to feel the hope of resurrection. In times of trial like the death of a loved one, we turn to the familiar practices and rituals of our faith and ancestors. And so we know that this disruption for a grieving community is doubly hard. We grieve this disruption with you.

During the COVID19 outbreak we will be following the Wisconsin DHS guidelines. While Brown County remains at a High activity level (as reported by the Wisconsin DHS), we will be limited in our funeral practices in the following ways\*\*:

### Visitation/Wake:

We are not able to safely accommodate a visitation or wake at this time.

### Funeral/Memorial Service:

We will host funeral/memorial services of ten or fewer healthy people in the sanctuary, Memorial Garden, a funeral home, or other venue. We require that all attendees over age two wear masks.

### Graveside:

We are able to host a graveside service outdoors and require that all people practice social distancing of 6 feet between households. Masks are required if social distancing is not possible. We are able to accommodate ten healthy people present.

### Repast/Collation:

We are not able to host a meal following funerals or memorial services at this time.

While we are limited in what we are able to host at this time, we are able to plan for memorials after the pandemic has passed. We would welcome the opportunity to host a memorial service for your loved one at a later date when we can all safely gather and celebrate their life.

\*\* When Brown County moves to a lower activity level and we move past Phase 1, this policy will be updated