

**UNION CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
COMMON MINISTRY
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF AUGUST 12, 2021**

Present:

Absent:

| | | | |
|----------------------------|---|-----------------|--|
| Pastor | Bridget Flad Daniels | | |
| Moderator | Tim Harder | | |
| Vice Moderator | Heather Collins | | |
| Treasurer | | Jeff Gibson | |
| Clerk | Gail Hohenstein | | |
| Education | | Nancy Gibson | |
| Gifts & Memorials | | Paco Espinosa | |
| Inreach & Membership | Denise Olson | | |
| Outreach | Achim Siefert | Christie Reese | |
| Stewardship | Clay Reese | | |
| Worship | Betty Bienash | | |
| Communications Coordinator | Ruth Homrighaus | Mary Ann Hudson | |
| Guest(s) | Gail Carels (Resuming In Person Worship Task Force) | | |
| | Julie Harder (Seminary Secrets) | | |

*HOW DOES WHAT WE AS COMMON MINISTRY ARE DOING AFFECT THE
CHURCH'S RACIAL AND SOCIAL JUSTICE WORK?*

Meeting held via Zoom.

Moderator Tim Harder called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

Gathering Prayer: Bridget shared a set of “COVID Beatitudes” and Common Ministry members shared additional thoughts.

Additions to the Agenda:

COVID-19 Business: Tim shared some opening thoughts. We are entering another wave of the pandemic. Social justice and mental health are issues for many who are impacted. In our discussions we need to keep in mind the trade-offs that every decision will pose, with a goal of striking a balance between conflicting needs (prevent further community spread and promoting vaccinations) but also finding a way to maintain the Union community. The support of the Church in the community is important to many.

- **Worship:** This is a difficult consideration because worship in community is important to many. However, Brown County is seeing high transmission and rising hospitalizations, and we don't know participants' vaccination status. Possibilities range to returning to completely virtual services to reinstituting earlier recommendations from the Resuming In-Person Worship Task Force. We might want to re-think the recent return to singing and may want to continue the social hour outside.

Betty Bienash, as chair of the Task Force, shared her thoughts. We know trajectory is rising and the Delta variant is very contagious, yet neither Brown County Department of Health nor the CDC are limiting in person indoor activities provided that precautions are being taken. We are taking appropriate precautions such as masking, distancing, having windows open to improve ventilation. Cantors are behind plastic. There is distancing among those leading and participating in the service. Until the CDC states a recommendation that in person indoor gatherings cease, we are taking precautions, as well as providing vulnerable people with options to worship virtually. She is pleased by what she sees at Union in terms of in-person worship. People are wearing masks. Attendance has been about 50-60 people well distanced. We can handle about 96 people on the church floor plus participant/leaders and folks in balcony. Heather gave thanks to the task force in their continuing evaluation and consideration as current situations change. Betty shared the task force has not yet re-discussed continuing or discontinuing singing (they meet next week). The folks at this meeting seemed to feel that folks may not react negatively to not singing, but would want to continue to print the words

in the bulletin so people can follow along. If in-person worship attendance increases to the point that it becomes an issue, the Task Force will initiate the reservation process so we can maintain safe distancing. Betty believes most of our folks are responsible and COVID cautious. A question was raised about the advisability of starting health checks. The Task Force will consider and make a recommendation. However, it would involve additional volunteers plus limiting the number of doors open for ingress. It was agreed that we should not encourage vulnerable and unvaccinated to worship in person.

- **Ministry Meetings:** Recent ministry meetings have been some in person, some virtual, one hybrid. Hybrid doesn't work, as we don't have the appropriate technology which makes for a difficult meeting. We will plan to use Zoom meetings for the near future depending upon community spread and hospital load.
- **Moon Beach:** Gail Carels had distributed the Moon Beach information about their COVID practices. All must be masked in the lodge when not eating, with tables socially distanced. Staff is required to be vaccinated. When guests sign in, they will be asked their vaccine status but vaccination is not required by the camp. Proof will not be required at this point in time. Moon Beach has added more outside tables and covered seating. Retreat planning team believes people are looking for interaction with others, so they are looking at small group activities rather than large gathering with a single speaker. They will emphasize that there will be strong efforts to have activities outside.
- **Education**
 - **Youth: Faith Formation.** After much discussion, Bridget will work with Education Ministry to host conversations with participating families in each group (FF, PF, and YCA) to discern what the best approach will be (in-person or online) for each respective group, logistics to be worked out. Right now, Education Ministry is preparing for Fall as if FF will be in-person with masking and social distancing, but if families prefer Edu. Min. will pivot. Kids are used to being masked, and no smaller rooms are being used. It is not anticipated that any of the rooms will be crowded. We can send materials home electronically if parents do not want their children to participate in person. Need to ensure leaders are comfortable. Some groups (e.g., PF and YCA) may choose to combine approaches depending upon the activity. After discussion it was agreed that leaders may inquire about eligible participants' vaccination status, as long as it is very clear that non-vaccine status will not exclude one from participation.
 - **Seminary Secrets:** Julie Harder raised a few points. She has 2 main goals. 1. Keep everyone in the classroom as safe as possible. Masks are not foolproof and the Delta virus is very contagious. Unvaccinated are several times more able to catch and transmit the virus. She feels everyone in her classroom needs to be vaccinated. While that may exclude some people, not requiring vaccination may exclude vaccinated people who do not want to be exposed. She will only teach in person if the whole group is vaccinated. 2. She wants Union to be a part of the solution to the pandemic. Getting 80-90 % of the population vaccinated is the only way around the virus. She believes Union should be taking a stand to have consequences to not getting vaccinated, and that any leader who wants to be in the room only with vaccinated people should have the option to do so. After discussion it was agreed that Julie's thoughts are not inconsistent with the discussion regarding the older youth (vaccine-eligible) above.
 - **Wednesday Dinners-** Discussion with families to be included in the Youth discussion above.
- **Events**
 - **Rummage Sale:** The sale will be mostly outside, but some items will be inside. Usually, attendance at any one time is only a few folks. Masks will be required indoors. The team will continue to ask neighbors to drop off items as well as come to purchase.
 - **Volunteer Fair:** Outreach has decided to delay.
 - **ReUnion Picnic:** Gathering will be outside, with bring your own picnic fare (not pot luck), weather permitting. Will not move inside if weather does not allow outside participation.
- **Promotion of Non-Union Events:** It was agreed that for events we promote but do not sponsor, we should include in the promotional materials a disclaimer that people who want to participate should contact the group for their COVID protocols.

Congregational Joys and Concerns: Joys and concerns were shared.

Minister's Report: Given the latening hour, Bridget felt the above discussion encompassed her report.

Clerk's Report

The minutes for the regular meetings of June 10 were approved. Heather/Denise.

Treasurer's Report

Clay shared the financial report. (attached). Pledge income is behind plan. Expenses are below budget. We need people to finish their pledges. Bridget's next Friday message will emphasize the important work of Union and that we are behind on budgeted giving. Generosity Team is working on strategies for giving. Report approved. (Gail/Achim).

New Business

Stewardship doing some roof repair. Thanks to Achim and Kathy for their planning work in sprucing up Pilgrim Hall.

Continuing Business

- Generosity Team: Group working on communication strategies to help with long term financial stability.
- Space Ministry Task Force: Group is looking at options for renovating the Mayflower classrooms to allow for room size flexibility, a soundproof area in Brain Center, and other matters. All will be to benefit Union's Faith Formation with the additional benefit of helping the 2 current non-profits using the lower level. We need to Make 2 bathrooms ADA accessible. Discerning professional planning help with the work to be included in an anticipated upcoming capital campaign with a number of other items.

Ministry Reports (unless covered in Ministry meeting minutes)

EDUCATION

(By Heather) No additions.

GIFTS & MEMORIALS

No report.

MEMBERSHIP & INREACH

New member meetings are scheduled for October. New Member Sunday is 10/24.

OUTREACH

Sherry Warren has agreed to be the EPH liaison.

STEWARDSHIP

No additions.

WORSHIP

A subcommittee is beginning to examine creative potential approaches for some 5th Sundays. Please share any ideas you have, or if you are interested or know others who might be interested in being part of the development, please forward names to Bridget, Mary Hemminger or Betty.

JOSHUA Report:

There was a prayer vigil at the site of a recent shooting this afternoon.

Communications:

They are keeping up with social media and trying to grow accounts, with a focus on things they have been asked to promote, as well as connecting with current events and events in the larger church. Working with generosity on the pledge campaign brochure and changes to the website's giving area.

Heather added she is impressed with what is out on social media and has had comments from non-Union friends that they resonated with Union.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn was approved. After prayer, the meeting was adjourned at 8:21 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gail Hohenstein
Clerk

Next meeting: September 9, 6 p.m. via Zoom
Prayer: Jeff

**Union Congregational UCC
Treasurer's Report July 2021**

| <u>Income</u> | <u>2021 Actual</u> | <u>2021 Budgeted</u> | <u>2020 Actual</u> | <u>Surplus Remaining</u> |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|------------------------------|
| January | \$58,360 | \$74,522 | \$80,947 | |
| February | \$25,898 | \$26,095 | \$23,476 | |
| March | \$54,392 | \$31,841 | \$29,563 | |
| April | \$38,632 | \$48,375 | \$48,007 | |
| May | \$21,582 | \$23,503 | \$23,955 | |
| June | \$15,530 | \$32,764 | \$33,698 | |
| July | \$26,649 | \$34,359 | \$32,622 | |
| August | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | |
| September | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | |
| October | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | |
| November | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | |
| December | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | |
| Total Giving | \$241,043 | \$271,459 | \$272,268 | |
| From Surplus | \$45,667 | \$26,478 | | \$16,587 |
| Total Revenue | \$286,710 | | | |
| <u>Expenses</u> | <u>(thru July 31)</u> | | | |
| Actual: | \$286,710 | | | |
| Budget: | \$297,937 | | | |
| Last Year: | \$281,707 | | | |

Comments:

After seven months, revenue is under budget by about \$30,500. YTD expenses are under budget by about \$11,000. Pledge income in July is \$19,000 or below budget about 65%, and YTD is about \$30,000 or about 13% less than budget. Non-pledge income in July is \$6,250 or 167% above budget and YTD at \$1,000 is about 3% below budget.

Continuing the June trend, YTD revenue falls below actual expenses. To reconcile revenue with expenses we have dipped into the the surplus at faster than we anticipated by over \$45,000.

Respectfully submitted, Jeff Gibson

**Union Congregational UCC
Treasurer's Report June 2021**

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| July | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | |
| August | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | |
| September | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | |
| October | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | |
| November | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | |
| December | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | |
| Total Giving | \$214,394 | \$237,100 | \$239,646 | |
| From Surplus | \$39,913 | \$27,235 | | \$22,341 |
| Total Revenue | \$254,307 | | | |
| <u>Expenses</u> | <u>(thru June 30)</u> | | | |
| Actual: | \$254,307 | | | |
| Budget: | \$264,335 | | | |
| Last Year: | \$241,690 | | | |

Comments:

After six months, revenue is under budget by about \$22,700. YTD expenses are under budget by about \$10,000. Pledge income in June is \$14,000 or below budget about 50%, and YTD is about \$20,000 or about 10% less than budget. Non-pledge income in June is \$1,260 or 34% below budget and YTD at \$3,500 is about 15% below budget.

Continuing the May trend, YTD revenue falls below actual expenses. To reconcile revenue with expenses we have dipped into the the surplus at faster than we anticipated by over \$10,000.

Respectfully submitted, Jeff Gibson