

## **Church Council minutes**

### **January 21, 2020**

Present: *Lorie Hershey (Pastor), Amanda Esh Bouwman (Elder), Bryan Geib (HRC), Jeff Knightly (Elder); Sheldon Rich (Elder); Elaine Shenk (HRC); Ethan Tan (Elder); Rebecca Weber (Deacon); Marcy Zimmerman (Elder); and invited guests Nancy Geryk and Robert Kuehl (Pastoral-Congregational Relations Committee)*

#### **1. Pastoral-Congregational Review – report and discussion**

Nancy Geryk, Robert Kuehl, and Elaine Shenk presented the report (circulated prior to the meeting); Drick Boyd was not able to be present. Council discussed the following:

- a. *There were only 32 responses. What was done/could we do to reach more people? Who are we not hearing from?* We heard a lot from members (90% of respondents) and from long-term attenders (nearly half of respondents have attended 16 or more years). We don't know as much about perspectives of non-members and those who have not attended as long. Survey response rates are often low; this is similar (slightly higher) response rate than the survey 3 years ago. Another possibility is that some people may not respond unless things are not going well. Some may not respond well to having to fill out a Google Form (paper forms were offered, none were requested).
- b. *There was a concern expressed about marriages that are struggling/failing, and also about youth that grew up and not connected to church now...are Elders talking about this?* Elders have talked a lot about baptism and youth, and some youth were wondering why the church was "worried" about them. There has not yet been a lot of discussion about how to better support relationships/marriages because we have learned of these situations fairly recently.
- c. *Feedback about Sunday School for children* – this is good for Sunday school teachers to hear.
- d. Some suggestions would be relatively easy to follow up on (e.g., a place during snack time for people to be if they don't feel comfortable in the large group; small group ideas) We don't always do a good job of advertising small groups that are already functioning, because some of the ideas mentioned are already happening.
- e. Some gave the feedback that they don't know what Council or leadership groups do. We decided to send a short summary of each leadership meeting to be added to weekly announcements. A number of years ago, we used to stand up during service and give a little summary about what Deacons, Elders, HRC do. Could revive this practice (e.g., when HRC is looking for volunteers in the spring).
- f. We decided to highlight specific sections for groups or individuals to follow up, as follows:
  - Feedback about leadership groups – Council (Elders, Deacons, HRC)
  - Sunday school for children – Sarah and Christine (via Amanda)
  - Adult Sunday school and small groups – (Sheldon)

Worship – Worship Committee (Lorie)  
Community outreach – (Mark)  
Finances – (Deacons)  
Building ad hoc group (Sheldon/Nancy)  
Welcome/congregational climate – Elders + ARC (Rebecca)  
Pastoral Review – PCRC (Nancy and Robert)

Note: In addition to highlighting these sections, we also agreed to share entire report with congregation (from Amanda as Council Chair)

## **2. Calvary building and Partners for Sacred Places Review/Proposal**

Sheldon Rich and Nancy Geryk (from ad hoc building group) presented the report from Partners for Sacred Places (PSP), (also circulated prior to the meeting).

- a. Partners for Sacred Places (PSP) did a good job diagnosing problems with the building:
  - i. Interviewed or heard from regular/infrequent/sporadic building users;
  - ii. There are few spaces left in this community available for infrequent/sporadic users at reasonable rates
  - iii. Rental income has been the way to keep the building afloat; this is not sustainable long-term
  - iv. Problems with governance, finance, maintenance/stewardship and costs,
  - v. detailed presentation of market research (i.e., no consistent policy for how much different entities are charged)
  
- b. PSP Recommendations
  - i. Consensus: aggressively seek major funding
  - ii. Plan from 20 years ago was 4C's should run the building; problem is ownership (Methodist denomination) but the local congregation is responsible for building. PSP says ownership needs to change. 4C's can contact funders who don't work with churches
  - iii. Dialogue with larger Methodist church has started; looks promising
  - iv. Recommendations caught Calvary representatives by surprise
  - v. Trustees and Calvary United Methodist need to respond to report/proposal
  - vi. Curio Theatre is a much-respected part of community; Paul Kuhn sits on trustees. At \$900/month (large space for very little cost). Curio/Paul also rent parsonage (but not at market rent). Recently, boiler cost \$10K and roof also needs major repairs—money not going into Calvary Center per se. PSP recommends selling parsonage and putting money into immediate maintenance, start capital study, and support pastor
  - vii. Curio is heavily subsidized program, uses a lot of space that could be redesigned into multi-use space for Curio and other events (Kol Tzedek high holy days). This is challenging recommendation.
  
- c. WPMF has been waiting for a long time for this study to emerge;
  - i. Questions have been asked as to where we are in this process.

- ii. WPMF has been very involved in this for the past year (seat on Trustees; part of 4Cs; interviewed by PSP; committee with users, especially those with maintenance experience)
- iii. Calvary has internalized the issue of lack of transparency
- iv. More dialogue about maintenance and stewardship
- v. Study is a lot to absorb for Calvary and to respond; major issue is whether they will decide to turn building over to 4Cs. We do not know their timeline to make these decisions.
- vi. What is the alternative? WPMF is not prepared to wait indefinitely; we too need to make plans/decisions.
- vii. 4Cs has a meeting scheduled at the end of January.
- d. How do we take this huge report to our congregation? What does it mean?
  - i. Sense of urgency has dissipated at the moment because the building is warm; however, there are major structural issues to deal with
  - ii. What does it mean to leave this building? Major issue to consider: Do we just want to be renters? Or do we want to be stakeholders and share responsibility for building maintenance/governance?
- e. Concrete steps forward:
  - i. Can we share whole report? (some felt we should share the report now; others felt we should meet to talk about it, not just share report).
  - ii. Sheldon will confirm with Calvary/4Cs that the report is not confidential and can be shared with congregation at this time.
  - iii. If that is confirmed, Amanda will share the report with the congregation (print/e-mail).
  - iv. Sheldon and Nancy will make a 3-minute summary of findings and recommendations during church service.
  - v. Amanda will send an announcement to the bulletin.
  - vi. We will hold a discussion on 2 Sundays during second hour (perhaps February 2<sup>nd</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>?) Lorie will check with Sylvia about schedule.

### **3. The next Church Council meeting is March 4<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm.**

Minutes taken by Elaine Shenk