

Council Meeting

Plymouth Congregational Church

November 28, 2017

6:00 P. M.

Call to Order:

Mark Simpson opened the meeting in due form.

Members Present:

Mark Simpson, Moderator

Doni Mooberry Slough, Stewardship

Julia Gaughan, Past Moderator

Marc Mahlios, Deacons

Jane Bireta, Moderator Elect

Kevin Carr, Mission

Doug Eason, Treasurer

Peter Luckey, Senior Pastor

Stephan Carttar, Membership

Phil Mitchell, At-Large

Norene Spears, Music and Fine Arts

Kris Marsh, At-Large

Sara Taliaferro, member of congregation

Barbara Palmer, member of congregation

Mary Lake, clerk

Staff Present:

No staff were present.

Opening Devotion:

Peter Luckey read a favorite poem of his which speaks to Advent and reminds us that God comes to us, not when the world is perfect and pure, but when it is broken. He followed with prayer.

Approval of Minutes:

Approval of October 24, 2017, minutes: Doug Eason moved to receive the minutes with the following corrections: Barbara Holland will be the primary person to cover the front desk with Jeremy Winfrey, Becky Foster, and Peter Luckey acting as her back-ups until a new person is hired. The name of Stefan, Eleanor McCormick's husband was misspelled. Stefan is correct. Phil Mitchell seconded. Minutes were approved.

Financial Report:

Doug Eason reported 83.3% of the year is completed, with 83.64% of receipts in and 81.54% of disbursements out. For the current month, total receipts were \$64,702 and total disbursements were \$76,072, leaving a monthly deficit of \$11,370. But for the year-to-date, total receipts are \$786,776 and total disbursements are \$767,022, for a net of \$19,755. Compare to last year this is a positive because in 2016, at this time total receipts were \$739,773 and disbursements were \$783,208, leaving a negative balance of \$43,435. From 2016 to 2017, this is a positive of \$63,189. Total current assets are \$394,813 and total liabilities are \$375,058, meaning there is \$19,755 in general operating funds. This year giving has been steadier throughout the year, but we are a bit behind in contributions coming from no pledges. Julia Gaughan moved to receive the treasurer's report and Stephen Carttar seconded. Motion passed.

Updates and Business:

Update on Peter Luckey, Senior Pastor: Mark Simpson

Peter returned to full-time status on October 26, 2017.

Update on Vision Ministry Task Force: Julia Gaughan

This was an opportunity for Council to have input on the VMTF draft proposal and the board and committee representatives to ask questions so that they can take the proposal back to their respective boards and committees for input. The draft Julia Gaughan presented to Council can be found in the church office. She asked that the board and committee chairs take the draft to their respective entities for feedback and recommendations. What will work? What are the impediments to the ideas? And so forth. Some of the ideas in the draft call for continuing programs and processes in place, and some call for pushing forward for change. She is looking for a time-line, not any additions to the draft. In January, she will ask for the recommendations be presented at Council for the final document to be approved at the Annual Meeting in early February. The three themes in the draft are: I. Expressions of Faith, with goals identified in order of importance as the data came in; II. Engagement with its goals again numbered in order of priority; Structure and Governance, again with ordered goals. At question is our identity and how we see ourselves. Julia Gaughan will email all board chairs and Council more information on the VMTF. This will be to help them understand and explain to their groups for better feedback.

Update regarding Council's letter to Justice Matters: Mark Simpson

Council received a written response from Justice Matters. The Council reviewed the response and discussed the next steps. This letter from Justice Matters was in response to a letter sent by Plymouth to its board in late August, outlining concerns many members had about the tactics used by Justice Matters. A copy of Plymouth's letter to JM can be found in the church office and on our website. Mark Simpson asked the Mission Board to review JM's letter and discuss it and report back how that Board feels the issues noted in Plymouth's letter are answered. The letter will be discussed at the Mission and Service Board meeting. The letter will be made available to anyone in our community who would like to

read it. Much discussion followed with some members of Council expressing that they did not feel the reply from JM addressed the concerns directly enough, even though the reply was well-written. In 2017, \$4000 was allotted for JM, with \$3000 having been paid. The Mission Spending Plan calls for \$4000 to be given in 2018 pending satisfaction with JM addressing Plymouth's concerns. Doni Mooberry-Slough will get feedback from the congregation on Sunday, December 3, when another MSP question, answer, and input meeting is held in the Mayflower Room after the 9:30 service. Most Council members agreed that no one questions JM's choice of issues, but rather their approach. The question is can Plymouth meet the expectations JM has for us as a supporter. Stephen Carttar suggested that a meeting be set between representatives from the Mission Board and JM. Julia Gaughan added that a member of Plymouth's pastoral staff should be there, too. Barbara Palmer, a member of JM's board of directors noted that there are 21 congregations supporting JM and meeting with individual churches would be a difficult task. Sara Taliaferro, also on JM's board also reminded the Council that JM is a new organization, and they have had much discussion on how to approach the issues they seek to address. They question just how to show how passionate they are. They have a good working relationship with the Lawrence City Council, she said, with Stuart Boley and Lisa Larsen actively working with JM. Mark Simpson noted that it is vital to get feedback to the church as a whole. He posed that maybe Plymouth should choose an official representative to JM. It was noted that then that representative would have a different role on the JM board; then, Doni pointed out, their first responsibility would be to speak for Plymouth. Peter Luckey noted that this difficult discussion is important; he found the reaction of JM at the Nehemiah Assembly to be very troubling, but believes Plymouth still has a growing relationship with JM. Phil Mitchell noted that Plymouth needs more representation at JM and that this would answer many questions and concerns. Marc Mahlios noted that Council's first obligation is to Plymouth and the Church needs to be informed so that they can give Council notice on how it wants to proceed with the relationship with JM. JM needs to give better information on where and how it is going to approach its addressing the issues outlined by it. Peter noted that Plymouth, with a long history of working for justice, is still trying to find how it will do justice forthcoming.

Recognition of Eleanor McCormick: Mark Simpson and Gene Bauer

Rev. McCormick handled the duties of the Senior Pastor, in addition to her own responsibilities, for eleven weeks following Rev. Luckey's injury. The Personnel Committee recommends and the Stewardship Board approves a one-time bonus of \$7,500 and an additional week of paid vacation for Rev. McCormick in recognition of the additional responsibilities she assumed. The motion came from the recommendation of the Personnel Committee, and Phil Mitchell seconded. Motion passed.

Fellowship Board Update: Mark Simpson

Council discussed how to move forward regarding the Fellowship Board. In recognition of the fellowship needs of the Church and the current Church by-laws, the moderators and pastors propose that all (8-9) of the positions on the Fellowship Board be filled at the annual meeting. Nominees for the board will be asked to commit to one year on the board and be tasked with coordinating one of three specific events: coffee hour, Thanksgiving lunch, or the church picnic. Staff members will be assigned to coordinate with the board for each specific event. The proposal also calls for the Membership Associate and Facilities Manager Rex Russell to liaise with persons responsible for coffee hour ; Membership Associate and the Senior Pastor to do so with the person organizing Thanksgiving dinner; and the Associate Pastor and the Christian Education Director with the picnic coordinators. The Board will not be expected to have the

usual number of regular board meetings. This proposal is to be continued through 2018, with assessment to follow to decide whether to go back to the original Fellowship Board model, or to revise the by-laws to allow for further change. Doni Mooberry-Slough moved and Kris Marsh moved to move forward filling the 8-9 spots on the Fellowship Board and to follow the proposed model for the Board's work. This will comply with the by-laws for filling the Fellowship Board. Motion passed.

Nominating Committee Update: Jane Bireta

Work is progressing and will be complete by the Annual Meeting for voting. Terry Schmidt has agreed to be the candidate for Moderator Elect.

Annual Appeal Update: Doni Mooberry-Slough

No hard numbers are available since pledges continue to come in with Peter's persuasive calling. But things are going well. 237 pledge cards have been returned and 170 are still needed. The Council is appreciative of Doni's work and Peter's persuasion.

2018 Mission Spending Plan Update: Doni Mooberry-Slough

Rich Bireta has developed a template to present at the previously mentioned meeting on Sunday, December 3, where the MSP will be discussed with the congregation. 2018 requests from boards and committees will be presented, and the need for money and questions can be answered before the Annual Meeting. This will allow congregants to see what is needed and what will have to be done if the funds do not come. The draft MSP will be presented to Council at the December 12, meeting and once approved will be finalized in January.

Membership Associate Search Update: Peter Luckey

Randy Ernzen, Kay Bradt, Eleanor McCormick, and Peter are on the search committee. They have strong candidates, and will meet on Sunday, December 3 to review them. Kay Koch has agreed to return—her last day is November 29—on an hourly basis to train the new hire.

Receptionist Search Update: Peter Luckey

Barbara Holland and Jeremy Winfrey are working on a job description for this position which will be published soon.

Pastors' Reports: Peter Luckey

Peter noted that even with the recent illnesses of staff and the vacancies, Plymouth has not slowed its progress as a church. The staff have gone beyond what is asked to ensure that. Rex Russell drove to St. Louis to pick up the parts needed to repair the boiler, so that the church would be comfortable for the Head Start kids.

Open Forum:

Mark Simpson reported for Larissa Long of Endowment that due to the 4% average of fund growth, the Endowment Committee voted to release \$55,620.52 into the general fund. This money goes to the MSP, but some funds have restrictions as to use as outlined in how they were endowed.

Adjournment:

Stephen Carttar moved and Mary Lake seconded to adjourn. Motion passed.

Closing Prayer:

The group repeated the Lord's Prayer for a closing.

Respectfully Submitted:

Mary A. Lake, council clerk, November 28, 2017

Next council meeting: Next meeting: December 12, 2017, Tuesday, 6:00 P. M.

Note early date and time.

Any member of the congregation is welcome.