

University Mennonite Church Business Meeting
February 18, 2018, 11:09 a.m.
Pending Congregational Approval

Attendance: Karl & Evelyn Bartsch, Cathy Bresee, Jeremy Gernand, Becky & Dale Kephart, Nel Kopp, Molly & Hal Kunkel, Fidele & Leah Lumeya, Rogers & Paulette McLane, Doug Miller, Fran Osseo-Asare & Osseo Asare, Esther Prins, Karen Rath, Jim Rosenberger, Amy Sattler, Kathleen & Rick Stehouwer, Joel & Krista Weidner, Meredith & Ben Wideman

Karen Rath opened with a reading of 1 Corinthians 13 and a prayer.

Review and Approval of November 19 Meeting Minutes – Nel motioned to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded and passed.

Leadership Reports – Reports from the chair and elders were provided on the web site. No additional details were added.

3rd Way Collective Report – A report was provided on the web site. Ben Wideman noted that the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship is interested in partnering with 3WC. Further exploration is needed to determine what that might mean and how it might work. They are a growing congregation and are looking for ways to engage students in a ministry. Ben noted that there will be challenges in wrestling with how the partnership could work and invited feedback and comments from the congregation on that endeavor. Ben also mentioned that 3WC is planning “Speak Your Peace” workshops for April and May that will be led by Marie Hamilton.

Committee Reports

Pastoral Search Committee Report – A report was provided on the web site. Kathleen Stehouwer noted that the committee is large (nine persons) and that to facilitate scheduling, the committee has decided that if we will require a minimum of six persons present to hold a meeting.

Worship Committee Report – A report was provided on the web site and no additional details were added.

Ghana Partnership Committee Report – A report was provided on the web site. Fran Osseo-Asare noted that the committee is looking for one or more persons to provide leadership and chair the committee. There are several initiatives going on and there is a need for leadership on the committee to more fully engage in the partnership opportunities.

Fellowship Committee Report - A report was provided on the web site and no additional details were added.

Finance Committee – The finance committee and treasurer provided several reports on the web site outlining our current financial position. Molly Kunkel and Jim Rosenberger reported that both income and expenses are where they should be for this time of year. The following reports are available on the web site.

- Treasurer’s Report
- Balance Sheet

- Income & Expenses vs Budget
- Income & Expenses by Class

Discussion on 2018-19 Funding and Pledges for 3rd Way Collective

Background – We are currently in the 4th year of funding 3WC and Karen explained that last year we added 3WC into our regular budget and asked for pledges earlier than usual (in March) to determine our ability to fund 3WC for another year. The leadership committee brought forwards a motion that we use the same procedure this year. The motion was seconded, and significant discussion followed. While the discussion focused on the funding of 3WC, it also included comments on general budgeting practices general church expenses and ministries and the methods we use to determine how we allocate monies among all the different budget categories. The bullet points below summarize points raised.

- Concern was expressed that the proposed process does not allow space for adequate discussion around the funding of 3WC and its impact on other potential budget initiatives.
- The concept of first fruits giving was discussed and concern was voiced regarding the process of “voting” for various budget initiatives (including 3WC) with our money.
- Ben and Meredith Wideman expressed frustration in having to endure an annual process where the congregation decides the future of 3WC (and Ben’s employment). Others agreed and the suggestion was made that for the future we develop a three year proposal for funding the ministry. Leland Glenna, from the 3WC advisory committee, agreed that the committee would take on this task.
- A comment was made that we don’t want the 3WC funding discussion to turn into another Camp Hebron discussion.
- The historical context of funding the ministry was described. The ministry was initially funded for three years by using excess reserve funds. From the beginning, there were concerns about our church’s ability to fund two full time staff members, once the reserve funds were drawn down. Part of the initial plan was to develop a “sustainable funding model” for the ministry that included significant funding from sources other than the UMC budget. Although progress has been made in this area, the majority of funds for the ministry still come from our church.
- Concern was expressed about our church budget model and how we determine how much is spent on “discretionary” items as opposed to “fixed costs” as well as what we spend internally (on ourselves) and what we spend on outside initiatives. The suggestion was made that we allocate giving to local charities as a percent of our overall budget.
- A suggestion was made that we should consider having a three-year rolling church budget.
- Comments were made that perhaps we need to spend time in further discussion ensuring that our congregation is in full support of the 3WC ministry. It was noted that we did conduct an evaluation after the end of the 3rd year and the congregation expressed strong support for the ministry at that time.

At the end of the discussion the motion on the floor was amended (by Joel Weidner and Meredith Wideman) to the following: The finance committee is charged with developing a comprehensive church budget proposal that would be distributed in March, along with a request for pledges to support the proposed spending. The congregation would discuss and approve the overall spending plan at the May meeting. This motion was seconded and passed.

Support for Naomi Tice with Mennonite Mission Network

Karen Rath noted the request from our conference to help support mission activities for Naomi Tice along with the leadership team's recommendation. Naomi's father, Enos, attended UMC as a student and she has been active in Allegheny conference.

Joel Weidner suggested that in light of the previous discussion, we table this item and that any support for Naomi be considered within the context of a comprehensive church budget in May. There was agreement to proceed in this manner.

The Meeting was concluded at 12:22 p.m.

Closing Hymn – Rogers led a closing Hymn, Blessed be the tie that binds, HWB 421

Next congregational meeting is scheduled for May 20 at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Joel Weidner, Secretary

Post Meeting Note from congregational chair and secretary:

Our bylaws specify that we hold a congregational meeting in the summer to approve our annual budget. Approving a budget in May, as outlined above, would present a conflict (albeit a technical one). One potential way to resolve this conflict would be to hold a preliminary approval of spending plan at the May 20 meeting and still conduct the official approval at the September 16 meeting. A proposed change to the bylaws, to provide greater flexibility in our meeting schedules may be warranted.