

MINUTES
of the
CHURCH COUNCIL
Saint Mark United Methodist Church
February 27, 2022

The February 2022 meeting of the Church Council was held in person in Room 111 on February 27, 2022. Amber Stewart, Council Chair, Presided.

The meeting was called to order at 12:45pm by Amber Stewart.

Dr. Everhart led the council in prayer.

Motion to approve the January minutes.

- Accepted and approved

Vision

- Motion – Connectivity Lead, Robert Gileo
 - Accepted and approved

Endurability

- Lilly Berrios reported that she had a – Request for approval
- 3 prongs
- **Scope** – facilities
- **Construction costs**
- **Physical facility cost**, second floor transition to connect to parking deck
- Define the overall total project cost, to include consultants
- Funding sources, what remains from sell of property
- Trustee funds available
- Credits available
- What we need to raise in capital
- Progressing in parallel on timeline
- Sanctuary and connecting from parking deck will require investments
- Physical improvements – 12-month project
- Designers, contractors, not done yet, will work on in the next couple of months
- Specific request – tax credit selling, may be eligible for tax credits
- Engage in the endeavor to pursue.

- **Darrell Card Harper** mentioned that we have engaged with Ms. Brewer previously, and the urban design commission. She could help determined the tax credit.
- **Reverend Hansen** requested clarity on total
- **Mitch Forster** questioned - will building tax value be reassessed? Do the work, government offers the tax credit in which we then sell.
- Upfront expenses first - 3.6M

Discussion ensued.

MOTION: Pursuing the tax credit scheme and retaining Ms. Brewer on this endeavor
Motion passed

Solidarity

- Mike Smith reported that the committee has been working since last summer
- Focus on social justice
- Social Justice corner in The Remarks
- Story about Juneteenth
- UMC Native American Remembrance Sunday
- UMC role in Native American Boarding Schools
- Testimony from Suzie Kezz
- Racial Equity
- Actively participated in goal setting
- Pride Award
- Rev Tillman – listening to recording

Plans for the future:

- Polly Murray – documentary
- LGBTQ – produce videos that will be available online
- Videos from church members
- Updating social justice page
- Social Justice calendar – ticker on front of webpage
- Soliciting social justice messages on the electronic sign
- Human Rights museum, churchwide guided tours
- Planning tour of Legacy Museum focus on lynching
- Working with Jess – youth service project

Storyteller, Mary Abbott Wait reminded us – the “church” has been a safe place or refuge, we should find a way to participate. She also reminded the group that Fort Street and Saint Mark have worked together in the past.

Dr. Bernice Kirkland – Dana reported that meeting, with Dr. Kirkland, on how to develop a coalition of six churches. March 27 to preach. Cooperative ministry together.

Ministries

- Robert Gileo – signed up for Pride Parade
- Larger North Georgia Pride organization – Leading the walk is Bishop Sue Halpert Johnson
- How to connect with the community – who do we connect with?
- Mission Insite – make up of who we are marketing in the neighborhood, community, 7 minute walk. Will distribute the report to the council.

- **Karen Podett** reported that Phil Crumbly is working on Fine Arts. Met with **Jon Easter**, reconstituting music and drama council. Work together with other Midtown churches.

- **Johnny Sims** reevaluated sound system, upgrade sound system. Very expensive. Recognize audio expenditures.
- **Roger Brown** – worship committee, additional volunteers. Sheila concerning Acolytes, to be reintroduced. Paraments and Chapel are appropriate.

Finance

Mark Wood reported:

Finance Committee and Treasurer's Report for the February 2022 Church Council Meeting

- I will be walking us through the financial statements to be reviewed this month which Eric sent out.
- On page 1 under liabilities, there is an item labelled "Excess Cash Received" with an amount of (\$9,752.60); what that represents is the month-end deficit that the church has generated and we'll get into the details behind that in this review.
- On the second page titled "Revenues", I'll point out that pledge contributions have come in at a little over \$51k, non-pledged contributions have come in at \$27,646 and combined with loose plate income of \$410, we had \$79,255 in total tithes and offerings. That is up about \$4,800 from last January, representing an increase of 6.5% so we're off to a good start from that standpoint.
- You'll see annual budgeted amounts over in the far right column and we'll be discussing that later in the meeting as part of the 2022 budget revisions. If you take those annual budget amounts and subtract the "YTD Actual" column amounts, you get the figures shown in "Annual Budget Remaining (This Year)".
- Moving down the page, you'll see in account #41030 for "Wedding Building Use" that we've recognized \$2,000 from a deposit put down for a May wedding.
- Then under the section titled "Designated & Trust Funds", the first account shown for "Mission Funds Income (#41060) has \$2,549 in income recognized from contributions made for special uses such as Breakfast/Supper Club and which has been moved over from that designated fund to cover actual expenses in that area for the month.
- The third line from the bottom ("41100 – Funds From Designated Accounts") at this point in the year only includes the pro rata monthly income transfer of our CY 2021 surplus of \$34,155, spread over the first 11 months of the year since giving is relatively heavy in Dec. and we are least likely to need any income supplement for that particular month.
- As we move through the year, we'll be recognizing in income additional transfers from trust funds to cover our monthly deficits, but what I've asked Deana to do is to hold off and just make those transfers at the end of each quarter. From an administrative standpoint, that's more efficient for her since any transfers from trust funds requires an actual transfer of cash from one bank to another. But also, from the standpoint of tracking weekly and monthly surpluses and deficits, I'd like those figures to reflect our true ongoing revenues and expenses with as little distortion from these budget supplement subsidies as possible.
- Moving to expenses on the third page, I'll point out that a starting point for identifying unexpected deviations from budget amounts for the month is the fourth column over labelled "% of Annual Budget Used This Year". Since we're only one month into the year and if we assume that each expense item is incurred evenly through the year, that percentage should be 8.3%. Of course not all expenses will be incurred evenly but at least that's a starting point for identifying deviations to investigate and discuss.

- Then looking at specific expense items and noteworthy deviations:
 - The senior minister's salary, housing and pension show up as slightly over budget, which is due to the fact that the actual expense will be dropping from July onward once our new senior pastor is in place.
 - The Associate Minister's salary, housing, pension and insurance are all showing as over-budget but that is due to those actual expenses being front-loaded into the first six months of the year during Jennifer's remaining time with us.
 - Moving down under "Staff Salary", we have a similar situation with the "Associate Pastor for Social Justice" with Josh's paid sabbatical for the first three months leading to using up 33.3% of the annual budget for that item, but then dropping to \$0 for April onward.
 - Moving down to account #52130 for "Administrative Assistant to Staff", we have a similar situation with Jim Card-Harper's actual salary being front-loaded into the first four months of the year and then dropping to \$0 for May onward after his retirement.
 - And then the last item on this page to point out is under Education/Worship for account 53300 "Hospitality and Evangelism". The January expense of \$647 is showing as eating up 51.8% of the annual budget; this is due to the cost of ordering more St. Mark coffee mugs for our visitors and paying that invoice in January. Deana will be reversing that out in February and moving that expense into a "Contingency/Miscellaneous" expense category shown on the next page that is better able to absorb that cost.
 - Then flipping to the next page and moving down to the "Utilities" section, you can see that our natural gas charges are running at a higher % of the annual budget through January (almost 15%), but since January is a colder month that doesn't look out of line at this point and natural gas costs should dip during the summer months.
 - In the next section under "Office Supplies/Expenses", we have a negative expense amount for "Office Supplies – General" which may seem odd; this is because we've received a member's advance contribution toward a new filing cabinet for the church and the invoice for that filing cabinet had not been paid yet in January.
 - Moving down under "Administrative Expense", I'll point that the "Credit Card Charges" account #54355 is higher in January; that relates to the surge in giving that we normally experience in December and where the fees that we have to pay the credit card network will have a lag so that we typically see more of that expense in January.
 - Then under the "Building/Grounds" section, we had a higher expense amount for account #55020 called "Building and Grounds Recurring Expense" due to mostly to a quarterly renewal payment on the maintenance contract for our HVAC system. A few lines down, "Janitorial Supplies" also came in at a higher % of the annual budget due to some restocking of supplies that was needed.
 - The final expense item on this page that I wanted to comment on is the "Multiperil Insurance" item under account 55200 where the first month of each quarter will normally represent a higher % as we make quarterly payments on our main multiperil insurance package, and additionally in January we made the payments on our business auto policy (\$238) and our umbrella policy (\$1,400). There is

one more annual policy premium to be made later in the year on our Directors and Officers liability insurance which comes due in May.

- Total Church expenses shown at the bottom of that fourth page came in at \$96,626.51 for the month of January and which represents a decrease in expense of \$15,681 or 14% relative to January 2021 expenses so we're off to a favorable start from that standpoint.
- Moving on to the church's Designated Funds on the following page, I'll point out the following:
 - In the top section under "Donor Restricted Funds", we have total expenses for month of \$620 deducted from several accounts, with a transfer of that total amount into the revenue line of the church's financials to cover those actual expenses.
 - The next thing I'll explain is that Deana has done some clean-up of outstanding balances in several designed funds shown below in the "Special Offerings-Restricted" and "Missions-Restricted" sections, by moving unspent amounts from YE 2021 out of several missions and special offerings funds and combining those amounts into account #86135 "Budget Restricted Missions Supplement" down below that has a transferred amount in the second column of \$20,967.
 - Finally, down toward the bottom of the page I'll mention that we've had some endurability committee expenses come through at just under \$5,000 for the month of January and captured in account #86155. I understand this mostly relates to bills from consultants regarding the chapel roof and sanctuary repairs assessments.

Then later in the meeting, the proposed revisions to the 2022 budget were presented, with these highlights noted:

- Projected revenues from pledged and unpledged contributions have been increased by \$10,000 based on higher final 2021 contributions received;
- Changes in pastoral and staff costs have been made to reflect changes in the senior pastor's salary and benefits that will occur with our new senior pastor as well as other pastoral and staff position changes that will be occurring in 2022;
- One increase was made in church programs cost to add \$2,000 to the budget for "Youth" to reflect higher expected costs with the church reopening in 2022;
- Administrative expenses were increased by \$6,447 to include the cost of the church's ACS accounting software inadvertently omitted from the initial draft of the budget;
- Revisions and an overall increase were made to expected withdrawals from "Selected Designated Funds" that will supplement the 2022 budget so that the church's projected budget deficit drops to \$0.

After some discussion of the proposed budget changes, Mark made the following motion:

"The Church Council approves the revised 2022 budget as presented, with the additional modification of augmenting the expense item "Salary-Cook" and consequential FICA, Medicare and pension costs, the retroactive salary increases to the Executive Director and Minister of Youth back to Jan. 1st, and an additional \$7,500 to cover the estimated cost of a church audit in 2022 instead of a church review."

- Karen Podett seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

Youth

- Jess is focused on getting more youth in person.
- Hinton and Puerto Rico,
- flooring in the gym
- Spiritual Formation
- Young Adult Group – one event, very successful
- Sherry Cochair Missions outreach committee with Lilly Collins Smythe

WIGGINS HOUSE

- Reverend **Jennifer Hansen** presented – see handout distributed ahead of last month's council meeting.
- Have we put PADV on notice of the damage – Karen
- No pending claim
- What kind of inspections were done?
- Weekly meetings with clients and PAD adhering to support for clients.
- Cumulative damage
- Current status, vacant, no indication
- Why did we move away from Women's Shelter to diversion?
- Intention of Wiggins House?
- City requirements – have we been grandfathered in?

Action Item: Form committee to determine future use of Wiggins House, requires more time and attention to include Trustees, Ministries and Outreach to create task force.

- How do we relate to PAD

Greg Washington made the following motion: Jess to be able to conduct the following Youth Fundraisers to support summer missions.

- In-person and "virtual" envelope tree: March 3-April 10
- T-shirt sales: ongoing; now until May 1
- Easter "egging": sales March 13-April 3, hidings offered the weekend before Easter (4/8-10) and Easter weekend (4/15-4/17)

The main purpose of having these fundraisers over by May 1st is many of our summer mission payments come due around that time and these funds would help me know what additional funds parents/youth will be responsible for.

- MOTION passed

Trustees

Endurability walkthrough, no report

No pending contracts

Staff Parish

- Handbook – **Mitch** reported. **Belva** questioned Dress code – must be attractive.

- MOTION: SPR accept handbook as presented to the church council.
- Motion passed

- Changes for Social Justice (who is going to take the lead) – Mike Smith
- Changes for Mission/Outreach (who is going to take the lead) – committee leaders have been set up to take leadership.

Action Item: Task Force Lilly, Sherry, and one of the lay leaders to form committee to determine what tasks need to be done for Ministries/Outreach

Move to adjourn – by Lilly – Passed. Moved to Executive Session at 2:28pm