

Approved by Council July 29, 2020

**LITTLE RIVER UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**  
**CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING**  
**June 10, 2020 – 7:00 P.M. via Zoom**

Members Present: Larry Roth, Moderator; Nancy Hall, Past Moderator; Dave Curtis, Historian/Archivist; Jan Curtis, Historian/Archivist; Nancy Carey, Music Committee; Bruce Summers, Stewardship; Andrew Hunter, Trustees; Carolyn Yocom, Treasurer; Chris Weakley, Deacons; Joe Christiansen, Endowment Fund; Jennifer Mack, Comptroller; Judy Moats, BOSJ; Kathy McCrea, Personnel; David Roach, Christian Ed; Barbara Shepherd, Communications; Karen Kleiber, Member-At-Large; Carrie Douglas, Nominations & Appointments; Carol Henning, Church Clerk Elect; Robin Petrusak, Assistant Treasurer

Staff Present: Alexis Kassim, Associate Pastor; Kathy Heyman, Office Administrator

Larry Roth presented the Agenda. No changes or additions were made to the agenda as presented.

Carrie Douglas opened the meeting in prayer.

**Approval of Minutes**

Minutes of the Council Meeting on May 13, 2020. A motion was made by Dave Curtis, seconded by Jennifer Mack to approve the minutes as presented. The motion carried.

**Pastor's Time**

Pastor Alexis reported to Council that our online Sunday worship services are going well. Craig and Dawn have been assisting in developing slides and overall order of worship. The worship services are being recorded and posted on YouTube and the link is posted in the Current Tidings each week. The Thanksgiving and Concerns are not being recorded for privacy concerns. Average number of participants is approximately 75. This is the number of devices present and does not include multiple members of the same household attending worship together. Approximately half of those signing on to attend worship services stay to participate in the virtual coffee hour after service. There is discussion on having Children's Church School virtually on Sundays. At this time, only Godly Play will be part of the Sunday service program about once per month and also posted on the YouTube channel.

On Sunday, June 14, we will honor members of our church family who graduated this spring or have done so since last June. This includes graduates from high school, college, technical school, or graduate school. The congregation will be encouraged to join in wishing all our graduates the best by wearing attire representing their alma mater! We will also honor our

church school teachers and First Friday volunteers for their dedication to our children and youth ministries.

Pastor Alexis told Council the Communities of Care (CoC) program has been launched. The program will have on-board and off-board Deacons making calls to LRUCC members and regular attendees to check on them during this time of social distancing. An orientation was held on Monday, June 8 with the Deacons to review the CoC packet of information and answer any questions regarding the program. Alexis thanked Dawn Jefferson, Amy Mireku and Kathy Heyman for their assistance with developing the information for the CoC program. Alexis reminded Council that Dawn is available on Wednesdays. Calls with Dawn can be scheduled via Sign-up Genius which is posted in Current Tidings. Also, every Wednesday at 12pm there is a Prayer Call/Check in with Alexis on Zoom with link in Current Tidings and in the weekly T&Cs. Dawn is leading a Faithful Action Bible Study on the Book of Acts at 5pm every other Monday. All welcome to join.

There will be a BLM demonstration held at LRUCC on Friday, June 19. More information on this event will be discussed later in the meeting. Alexis mentioned to Council there are many meetings/events being scheduled on the church calendar and to check with the Church Office when scheduling meetings/events via Zoom for availability on the calendar. Alexis let Council know she would be off for a few days during the week of June 15. Alexis reminded Council there would be a joint worship service with several UCC churches and Potomac Association on Sunday June 21. This service was rescheduled from May due to Zoom connection issues. Alexis informed Council she has been meeting with a task force of church members regarding her pastoral role at LRUCC and transition with Interim Pastor planned for early fall.

## **Financial Update**

### **Treasurer's Report**

Carolyn reported to Council LRUCC received a \$25,000 grant this week from Fairfax County. Thank you to Michelle Mitchell and Pastor Alexis for coordinating the information for the grant application. Finance Team will be reviewing guidelines. More information will be provided to Council once the guidelines are reviewed and allocation for the funds decided. Finance will work with the Trustees and BOSJ regarding the distribution of the funds.

Carolyn Yocom, Treasurer, distributed the financial overview report prior to the meeting via email to Council for their review. Carolyn reviewed the report with Council.

### **Operating Budget**

Income over the first five months has ranged in 2020: \$34,600 to \$66,000; 2019: \$40,900 to \$61,700. Carolyn reported these figures provide a sign the church finances are holding steady during difficult times. May was a good month--\$57,279. On-budget extra fund-raising totaled

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\$3,788, which is about \$400 above our goal of \$3,333. Overall, income is about \$7,700 under budget.

#### Expenses

Carolyn reported to Council, staff and volunteers are continuing to limit spending as much as possible, and will defer to Andrew/Trustees on savings achieved via building and utilities.

Pastoral expenses currently \$10,000 over budgeted; this should begin to decline in June.

Finance will be working with BOSJ to define \$1,000 in program spending that needs to be moved into benevolences and area best to distribute.

OCWM has not been disbursed for this year. Church is likely due quarterly payments. Office has not received an invoice—Michelle Mitchell, bookkeeper, will contact CAC treasurer and inquire about this.

Slightly over budget on office operations and personnel. Bookkeepers have done an exceptional job keeping track of all the spending.

#### Fund Balances—notable changes for the month

An increase of \$5,390 in off-budget benevolence funds, \$3,880 in expenses. Endowed and designated funds increased by \$1,825 (Ginna Dalton and memorial garden). Miscellaneous pass-through – Finance is reviewing this area.

#### Cash Flow and Ongoing Efforts

Thanks to the Paycheck Protection Loan, cashflow is steady. Finance Team took the training on how to report and apply for loan forgiveness. It will take some bookkeeper time and effort to apply. Finance Team will meet on Friday to review how bookkeepers have set up a way to track spending and evaluate what, if anything, will need to be returned.

#### **Stewardship Committee**

Bruce Summers reported to Council during May LRUCC received \$52,255 in pledge income. This is plus \$24,400 over what was received in April.

To date at the end of May we have received \$218,712 which is 101 % of the year to date target figure (payments on pledges).

At the end of May we were at 97% collected of the year to date target figure for total income.

The only negative number was for Endowment Fund Transfer. It should be \$1,500 for the year and we are -\$40 year to date, perhaps this transfer can be made soon. We received at least one new pledge so our total pledges YTD is \$511,386. Of this we have received \$221,292 or 43.27 % of year to date target for paid pledges. This is above the 42% paid pledge that we projected for the end of May.

Overall, we are doing well. The Stewardship Committee offers its sincere thanks to Members and Friends who have contributed to the Operating Funds needed to sustain our church

community. We are also gratified by the generous gifts to benevolences and special funds that serve our wider community and neighbors.

### **Trustees Report**

Andrew Hunter Chair reported to Council the new phone system equipment has arrived at the church and should be installed soon. Trustees are working with church staff to update the energy contracts for gas and electric to identify cheaper, more environmentally sound options. The church entered into a new gas supply agreement and are starting to get information on electricity options. We have been working through Fairfax County's customer choice program, a resource initially identified by Pastor Alexis, that has a person who is knowledgeable about helping churches in this process. In addition, the church identified the power company estimated our bill incorrectly in April, so a substantial credit was received. This also helped identify why energy usage had not decreased more during the closure of the church building. With this issue now resolved, we are making good progress in lowering the church's utility bills across the board.

Trustees and staff are currently working on an issue with dead trees at the edge of the church property and nearby neighbor's house. Unfortunately, this will be a substantial expense for the church, but for the safety to all the trees will need to be removed.

Staff and volunteers have been sprucing up the church during the building closure with painting social hall, hallways, sanctuary, and church office. Thank you to John Davis and Nick Renzo and other staff/volunteers for all their hard work with the painting and interior clean-up of the church.

Andrew informed Council due to building closure, there will be a reduction in cleaning services. The savings in cleaning services was not seen in the financial reports reviewed for this meeting but will be reflected in next month's church expenses.  
church expenses.

### **New Business**

#### **Black Lives Matter**

Larry Roth reported that multiple conversations have been started regarding the ongoing racial justice demonstrations around the country. There is a sense that LRUCC needs to engage the question, "how can the church do better?" in a substantial way.

In discussion, details were given for a demonstration that UCC congregations across the region are participating in front of their churches on Friday, June 19 (Juneteenth) at 4:00pm. Information on webinars and events being held by Central Atlantic Conference will be communicated to the congregation via our Facebook page and weekly emails.

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Ideas discussed by Council:

- More in-depth classes/sessions and book discussions could be held on the topic of racism
- List books for children and adults on the topic of racism on LRUCC website, such as: *White Fragility; How to be an Anti-Racist; Slavery by Another Name*
- Order BLM banner for in front of Little River
- Send letters to government leadership (County Supervisors/Police Chief); have organized letter writing through the church
- Center our anti-racism work more prominently on main page of LRUCC website
- List ways individuals can take action within the community against racism
- Post pledge to "Get Out the Vote" link (in conjunction with UCC campaigns)

From Council discussion the following action items were identified:

- Karen Kleiber and Jennifer Mack will work on developing a program for parents to have meaningful conversations with their children. Alexis will assist in providing emails/contact information.
- Barbara Shepherd will work with Communications Committee on posting links and resources on LRUCC website
- BOSJ will work with John Davis and Evangelism Committee on getting a BLM banner up by June 19th
- David Roach and Jan Curtis will work on compiling a list of books/resources on racism to post on website

## **Unfinished Business**

### **Governance Reform**

Larry discussed with Council the need to schedule a special additional Council meeting in July with agenda topic of church governance reform. In discussion, it was consensus of the Council to not schedule a special meeting at this time due to the current need to focus attention on moving through the Covid-19 pandemic and reopening of the church building. By consensus the next Council meeting will be scheduled on Wednesday, July 29. This meeting will be scheduled as a summer (July/August) Council meeting.

### **Covid-19 Response**

The Council discussed how church is responding to Covid-19. Feedback from the congregation has been positive on connecting online for Zoom Sunday services. Some members have expressed missing the social interaction and being at the church. In discussion, Council suggested a reminder be sent out through church communications that the labyrinth is open and being maintained. All are welcome to come to the church to walk the grounds even during this time of closure of the building. In further discussion, Council suggested virtual options for Sunday worship continue to be explored even once the church building is reopened. The

congregation will have different levels of comfort in returning for worship services and both virtual and in-person options should be offered going forward.

### **Interim Pastor Search**

Larry reported good feedback has been received on the questions sent out to the congregation and committee members on criteria to be considered in developing a position description for the Interim Pastor. The position description will be sent to Potomac Association for review once a finalized version is completed by the Interim Pastor Task Force. An anticipated start date for Interim Pastor is planned for early fall.

Carolyn Yocom closed the meeting in prayer.

### **Additional Boards and Committee Reports**

The following Music Committee report was submitted by Amanda Halstead via email:  
Here is an update from the Music Committee:

Some people might not be aware, Craig has been meeting with the choir on Thursday evenings over zoom. Choir members send in vocal tracks and he has layered them together for a virtual choir. Current members, former members, and friends from near and far have participated. On average, he has 10-12 people participating each week. The Music Committee has upgraded our CCLI license to include live streaming and zoom. This enables broadcast and text display for music of most liturgical music publishers. This week, the Music Committee will meet with Pastor Alexis and Craig since the Music Director position is supervised by both the Music Committee and Senior Pastor. The goal is to foster communication as Pastor Alexis takes over supervisory duties and establish new routines for annual evaluations of music staff. Personnel Committee is invited to the meeting. Finally, if anyone has any comments or ideas to share with the Music Committee and staff regarding music worship as we continue online services, please email me at [halstead.piano@gmail.com](mailto:halstead.piano@gmail.com).

Nancy Carey will be attending tonight's meeting to represent Music. Thank you, Nancy!

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