

Approved at February 12, 2020 Church Council Meeting w/corrections

LITTLE RIVER UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING
January 8, 2020 – 7:00 P.M.

Members Present: Nancy Hall, Moderator; Larry Roth, Moderator-Elect; Dave Curtis, Historian/Archivist; Amanda Halstead, Music Committee; Adam Honeysett, Stewardship; Andrew Hunter, Trustees; John Mingus, Past Moderator; Tom Ross, Nominations and Appointments; Chris Weakley, Deacons; Brian Payne, Endowment Fund; Joe Christiansen, Endowment Fund; Bruce Douglas, Member-At-Large; Karen Kleiber, Member-At-Large; Mary Summers, Member-At-Large; Jennifer Mack, Comptroller; Judy Moats, BOSJ; Kathy McCrea, Personnel; Barbara Shepherd, Communications; David Lindsey, Senior Pastor; and Alexis Kassim, Associate Pastor

Executive Session was held prior to the Church Council Meeting. This session was closed to LRUCC staff members.

Church Council meeting reconvened at 8:00pm. Pastor David opened the meeting in prayer.

Nancy Hall Presented the Agenda. No changes or additions were made to the agenda as presented.

Approval of Minutes

Motion made to approve December minutes made by Chris Weakley and seconded by Tom Ross. Motion carried to approve minutes.

Pastor's Time

Pastor David shared that both services on Christmas Eve were well-attended with lots of visitors. Attendance on the Sunday after Christmas, typically a low turnout Sunday, was also high with some repeat visitors!

On Jan. 12th we welcome back Rob Peters to preach and lead a talk on his new memoir after service. Pastor David will be leading a Poetry class at same time.

Bill Hartzler's memorial service has been scheduled for April 18th at 1:00 PM (Saturday after Easter). Deacons are aware and have it on their calendar. Some deacons have signed up to help already. Kathy Hartzler would like to scatter Bill's ashes in the Memorial Grove after the service.

Kathy Heyman and others on the office staff have proposed revisions to our Employee Handbook. The Personnel committee has received the proposal and is looking it over. Key revisions include putting in place an accrual system for PTO, reconsidering paid holidays, inclement weather policy, and including a performance evaluation form. The goal is to finalize the revisions soon because the Finance team will need to start tracking PTO at the beginning of

the year, so it won't be difficult to "back track" for accrued hours. Also, with it being January, clear inclement weather policies need to be in place.

Pastor Alexis shared that the Board of Christian Education wants to offer the Our Whole Lives (OWL) human sexuality program to 7th-9th graders this year since we finally have enough youth in that age group to teach it. Alexis is working on putting together a teaching team that would ideally consist of 2 female and 2 male identified persons without children currently in the youth program, but everyone who has been invited to teach thus far has declined. If no one agrees to teach, CE will likely have to delay the class until the fall.

This summer the youth will attend the UCC's National Youth Event (NYE), July 22-25 at Purdue University. This will be in lieu of a work-based mission trip this year. NYE is a special nationwide denominational gathering for all youth ages 12-22 and occurs every 4 years. Alexis is working with other Potomac Association churches to see if we can charter a bus together from the DC area. The cost is \$375/person which will make fundraising for youth with financial hardship easier than the Puerto Rico trip last year.

Dawn Jefferson, a Master of Divinity student at Yale, approached Alexis recently to inquire about doing her summer fieldwork requirement as LRUCC's intern this summer. Dawn is from Northern VA and her mother lives at Greenspring. She is interested in ministry to the elderly and adult Christian education. If she were be our intern, we would need to let her know by early April to complete the paperwork. Her service would be from June 1-August 15, 2020. LRUCC would be expected to offer a stipend, but the exact amount is not known at this time.

Treasurer's Report

Carolyn Yocom distributed a financial overview and report to Council. She noted that the overpaid Potomac Association dues won't be refunded, instead we will adjust our next payment in 2020 to make it even. A large gift was received about a week ago to fulfill a pledge which is good news! The report includes a column titled "percentage of actual spending" which gives us a sense of where are funds are going *from the General Fund only*. Comment was made that the 6.7% of benevolences is just Potomac Association and OCWM dues and thus skews impression of our generosity. The percentages don't account for endowment dispersals, in-kind donations, etc.

Stewardship Report

Adam Honeysett shared his gratitude for our AMAZING bookkeepers who have done a lot in a small amount of time to reconcile pledges and automatic withdrawal system (VANCO). We are currently at 83.5% (roughly \$513,500) of our pledge goal (reflects VANCO). Stewardship is now working on getting us to our next benchmark of our pledge goal of \$580K, and then on to the aspirational goal. The church lost approximately \$32,000 in pledged income from 2019 as a result of deaths, transfers, and other decisions not to pledge.

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Trustees Budget Discussion

Andrew Hunter led a discussion of the 2020 draft budget, which was dispersed to the council. The draft works off a basis of \$580K since that is what was pledged last year. A discussion was had about the necessity of including \$6K in “special fundraising” for unbudgeted priorities. Decision to keep it in there for now since it reflects roughly what we raised in 2019.

ACPS signed a new 3-year contract which has them paying a bit more for shared cleaning and security expenses, etc.

The 2020 budget includes 10K for BOSJ benevolences as a baseline for engaging our interests locally. This will be offset by a decrease in our OCWM contributions (money goes to UCC national setting). We would still encourage folks to give to the 5 special UCC offerings as a way of supporting the denomination.

Andrew did his best to trim program budgets without causing undue harm, but there is still work to do. One large expense that could be trimmed is the big summer floor cleaning. We might be able to do fewer rooms and/or have volunteers clean the floors.

Office operations costs were down in 2019 now that staff have more control over these expenditures. More will be trimmed from that line item for 2020.

Building maintenance line item will be trimmed. Maintenance costs are unpredictable, but we do have a major repair reserve fund if something major happens.

\$3K is given for a First Friday coordinator (translates to roughly \$500 per 6 sessions in 2020)

All staff will receive a COLA except for Pastor David (at his request)

Nothing budgeted for savings this year

Questions were raised about where we get more consistent building use income from. We still haven't received the final payment from Virginia Music Adventures, but we are not likely to recover that. The Samoan congregation who used LRUC for their New Year's Eve service might be looking for a more permanent space. Pastor David can follow up on that.

Music Committee

Nakia Verner, a colleague of Amanda Halstead's, will be our featured soloist on January 19th (MLK Sunday)

BOSJ

All are encouraged to attend our private screening of *Just Mercy* on Jan 26th at 1:00 PM at Cinema Arts Theater. Tickets are free but we do require registration. An Eventbrite link has been posted to the Facebook page and will be in the Friday emails. BOSJ plans to invite other

organizations like OAR and Friends of Guest House to the screening after LRUCC members have registered.

Deacons

Lent begins on February 26th with our Ash Wednesday service. The focus of the Soup & Supper discussions will be the book *White Awake*, by Daniel Hill, a pastor in the Chicago area. All are encouraged to begin reading the book now. Discussions will be led by facilitators from Challenging Racism, an anti-racism group in Arlington.

Nominations & Appointments

The “Draft” of potential nominees held on January 5th went very well. Hopefully it will be a process we can use again in the future. A spreadsheet was sent out to the council with the names of everyone “drafted” by the various boards. Chairs are asked to put their updates in the spreadsheet and Log into Realm.

First Friday

Attendance has been great this season! Our kickoff in October was highly attended. November not as high (day after Halloween), and December was our highest attendance. We were able to balance program expenses by paying Santa in cookies rather than dollars (at his request). Children participating seem to be a good balance of church, ACPS, and others from the community coming by word of mouth.

Realm

Some on council reported not receiving invites to Realm yet. Everyone is encouraged to double-check their inboxes, especially if using a shared email account with another family member. Pastor David will continue the rollout this week. The more people log-in and play with it, the more bugs will be worked out in a timely manner.

Governance Restructure

Karen Kleiber and Tom Ross distributed an executive summary of the main takeaways from the first Governance retreat in June 2019. Council members agreed to extend the meeting by 10 minutes to brainstorm items that we could move forward on quickly. After 1 minute of reading the summary, council members were asked to share their top choices to present at the Annual Meeting. Top choices included:

- Council only meets when necessary because Governance and Ministry boards can and should be empowered to make decisions
- We should continue to meet as a whole council so that we’re all on the same page with the issues and concerns of the church
- Make the Moderator-elect chair of the Ministry Board, and give pastors voice but not vote

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- Make board terms less than 3 years
- Give at-large members a more specific portfolio
- Major decisions are prepared in draft and can be considered by all affected persons/groups before being finalized

Brief discussion was had about the pros and cons of going back to a Governance and Ministry Board model vs. meeting as a whole council every month. Benefits of going back to Gov/Min board model is to allow more time for robust discussion about the calendar, worship, congregational concerns, etc. These things aren't given more than 10 or so minutes at a full council meeting. Governance likewise needs more time to look through policies and budgets, etc. It would be beneficial if Ministry and Governance boards met on different nights rather than at the same time so that folks could attend both meetings if desired. Council could then meet quarterly or as needed.

Suggested that council propose an amendment to bylaws to have Moderator-elect chair the Ministry board and float the idea of revising term limits. Boards and committees are encouraged to look at their section in the bylaws and suggest how many members they truly need to function.

Annual Meeting announcement goes out to the congregation no later than Jan. 19th!

Annual Meeting is Sunday, February 2nd

Next church council meeting is Wednesday, February 12th at 7:00 PM

Pastor Alexis closed with a reading of the Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi

Meeting adjourned at 9:26 PM