

# **LITTLE RIVER UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

## **Annual Meeting**

February 7, 2016

The 2016 Annual Meeting of Little River United Church of Christ was called to order in the Social Hall at 12:08 p.m. by Acting Moderator Rob Peters.

Senior Pastor David Lindsey led an opening prayer.

Rob noted that this is the 60<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of our congregation. He outlined guidelines for speakers, and noted the presence of a quorum. In the absence of George Leonard as parliamentarian, a copy of Roberts Rules of Order was close at hand.

Without objection, the reading of the call for the meeting was dispensed with.

Rob announced that the minutes of the 2015 annual meeting had been approved by the Council on February 5, 2015.

The minutes of the special congregational meeting of October 11, 2015 were distributed. A motion to approve (Brian Payne/Barbara Allen) was approved by voice vote.

Rob announced that without objection, the minutes of today's meeting will be approved by Council at its next meeting. There were no objections.

### Approval of clergy salary/housing allowance ratios

Rob announced that under IRS regulations, it is necessary that the congregation approve the salary/housing allowances for clergy. For David Lindsey, this ratio will be fifty percent for each. For Hank Fairman, \$3,500 per month will be allotted for housing. A motion to approve (Sally Ann Harper/Chris Weakley) was approved by voice vote.

### Receipt of reports of boards, committees, officers and staff

The annual report containing reports of boards and committees was distributed. For the Trustees, Joe Christiansen noted an error on page 24. Robin Petrusak had NOT resigned in July; she remains on the board. Re. the Music Committee, Ed Manchester offered hearty thanks to the music staff, a comment received with applause. Treasurer Gary Allen noted that a budget shortfall of over \$56,000 predicted at mid-year had been reduced to about \$17,000 by the end of the year through cost-cutting efforts by boards, committees, and staff, to whom he offered thanks.

David encouraged members to read his report, and all reports, and offered thanks to Cici Thompson for her service as Moderator before she became ill part way through her term.

Hank Fairman also encouraged members to read his and all reports. He announced that the free-will offering at the baked potato lunch preceding this meeting had raised \$1,054.50, with \$275 in in-kind contributions. Funds will be used for Pilgrim Youth Fellowship (PYF) participation in the UCC National Youth Event 2016 (NYE) in Orlando, Florida. July 26-30, 2016.

### Approval of membership changes

Hank spoke for the Board of Deacons and the Membership Clerk on changes in LRUCC membership during the year (pages 14-17 of the annual report). The membership drop from 573 to 498 resulted largely from transfers and removals, many of which could have been recorded in earlier years. That is, we had been overstating the number of both active and inactive members. A motion to approve the transfers and removals as recorded in the report of the Membership Clerk and as recommended by the Board of Deacons was adopted by voice vote.

#### Approval of changes to the Endowment Fund Policy

Cici assumed chair of the meeting while Rob presented recommended changes to the endowment fund in his role as outgoing chair of the Endowment Fund Committee. The changes were distributed. The word "General" was added to "Endowment Fund" at the bottom of page 5, so that it now reads "Unrestricted memorials and special gifts shall be transferred to the General Endowment Fund". Extraneous quotation marks remaining from adoption of the policy in 2016 were removed. Fran Durocher moved, and it was seconded to accept the proposed changes to the Endowment Fund policy and Plan of operations, with these revisions. The motion was adopted by voice vote.

*The Endowment Fund policy as amended is available on the web site. Click on Policies at the bottom of the home page.*

#### Approval of Building and Parsonage Fund changes

For the Finance Committee, Dave Curtis moved, and it was seconded, that: 1. The negative cash balance in the Building Fund should be written off by transferring \$18,227.31 from the General Fund. 2. The Building Fund liability to repay the Parsonage Fund the \$30,000 loan and the Jubilee Fund liability to repay the Parsonage Fund the \$20,000 loan should both be cancelled. He briefly summarized his rationale and discussion for the motion which had been printed and distributed. The motion was adopted by voice vote.

#### Resolution on Syrian Refugees

For the Board of Outreach and Social Justice, Karen Kleiber moved, and it was seconded, the following resolution:

##### **Whereas,**

In his human life, Jesus of Nazareth was a political refugee in a time of persecution and religious intolerance.

And, from our founding, Little River UCC has shared a public witness against the systemic evils of racism, sexism, heterosexism, denial of aboriginal rights, and religious intolerance. Our congregation upholds the principle that all people are God's people regardless of race, religion, heritage, or other human-made distinctions.

And, because of the rise in Islamophobia, denial of refugee rights and the prejudice against citizens of Syria and other Islamic peoples who reside in (or hope to reside in) our communities, our congregation feels called to speak and to act in witness to our faith.

##### **Therefore,**

We, the members and clergy, of Little River United Church of Christ, stand in support of all people and communities that have been directly challenged by the

political and humanitarian crisis in Syria, and the Middle East, and the rise of hateful speech and Islamophobia in our nation. And therefore, Little River UCC:

1. Calls for prayer for all those affected by the Syrian crisis: internally displaced persons, refugees and those seeking to care for both populations;
2. Reaffirms the historic role of the United Church of Christ as an advocate of human rights for immigrants, refugees, migrants and asylum-seekers and our heritage of resettling and assisting refugees;
3. Encourages partnerships with religious and other non-governmental organizations, as well as government agencies, in the care and resettlement of refugees;
4. Calls individuals to petition the President and their U.S. Senators and Representatives for the United States to receive more refugees; and
5. Commits to partner with agencies that are working to host refugee families resettled in the United States and Puerto Rico, until such time as such needs are met and those displaced can find a peaceful home.

The resolution was adopted by voice vote.

#### Election of officers and nominees to boards and committees

For the Nominations and Appointments Committee, Roy Brooks distributed a ballot for church officers and for members of Council, boards, and committees. Before the vote, the ballot was corrected to add Mary Summers as nominee for Treasurer and Bob Lingo as nominee for Outreach and Social Justice. The spelling of Carolyn Yocom's name was corrected. The result was 94 ballots cast in favor of the entire slate, with none against.

It was noted that even following the election, there will remain vacancies on boards and committees. The Nominations and Appointments Committee has worked long and hard seeking volunteers for these positions and it will continue to do so, but many members of the congregation have declined to serve. Tom Ross pointed out that this is an issue that will be more easily resolved if the new governance proposal is adopted. It may be that several boards and committees could operate efficiently with fewer members.

A motion to authorize the Moderator to appoint members to the Nominations and Appointments Committee was withdrawn after it was pointed out the Council already has this responsibility.

#### Approval of actions recommended by the Mission and Vision Study Group

David presented the report of the Mission and Vision Study Group. They determined that our existing mission statement was still valid. David moved, and it was seconded, that the following be added to the Mission Statement as our Vision Statement:

Little River celebrates diversity, independent thought, and faithful action in our congregation, neighborhood, and world by doing the following:

- nurturing individual and congregational spirituality,
- serving our community,
- advocating for all God's creatures and creation.

The motion was adopted by voice vote.

Approval of Bylaws changes re. Church Council and Communications Committee

For the Council, Past Moderator Tom Ross proposed bylaws changes dealing with the church's organizational structure and governance. He moved, and it was seconded, the following:

*See attachment 1.*

It was asked how the new structure had worked during the last two years of trial on an experimental basis. Better attendance at meetings, sharper focus on issues, better use of time, and a redefinition of several church policies and methods of operation were among results cited. Communications across the structure still need improvement. The new Communications Committee may help. It was noted that the Council would still exist as a coordinating and communications vehicle and that all meetings of the Council, boards, and committees are open to attendance by any member of the congregation.

Some felt that the new structure unwisely separated governance decisions from ministry decisions, and that all financial power was vested in the Governance Board, whereas ministry should be the primary focus of the church.

In answer to a question of where the Transitional Pastor for Faith Formation would fit in the proposed structure, David replied that all of the staff, with the probable exception of the Sexton, will be aligned with the Ministry Board and its committees.

Overlap and communication between the Governance and the Ministry Boards are encouraged by the "Hotchkiss Model" that inspired this proposal. The Moderator and the Senior pastor would each chair one board and serve ex-officio on the other.

The motion was adopted by show of hands with six members in the negative.

Approval of the 2016 operating budget

David opened the discussion with comments about church budgets in general. A good rule of thumb is that 10% of the budget should be saved, 10% given away, 50% devoted to staff, and the remaining 30% devoted to operations and programs. The 2015 budget did not align well with these percentages. It devoted only 0.14% to savings, 16% to benevolences, 60% to staff, and 24% to program and operations. If staffing remains the same in 2016, it will account for 65% of anticipated revenues. (Pledged income to date for 2016 is below that budgeted for 2015, and actual income was down substantially from amounts pledged.) David stated for the record that he opposes cuts to Our Church's Wider Mission as well as cuts in ministerial staff. Nevertheless, he believes we must pass a balanced budget.

Joe Christiansen, Chair of the Board of Trustees moved, and Ben Northrup seconded, the adoption of the 2016 budget in the amount of \$678,832, as shown on pages 49 and 50 of the annual report. Joe explained that this budget is lower than for 2015 by nearly \$50,000 because of lower forecasted revenue. To achieve a balanced budget, substantial reductions are proposed in benevolences and mission, and in pastoral salaries and benefits.

There followed an extended discussion, lasting nearly an hour and a half, including at least 20 speakers.

Joy Faunce moved, and it was seconded, to adjourn the meeting until March 6 while continuing to operate under the 2015 budget. The motion was approved by a voice vote.

Rob announced that the annual meeting of the congregation will reconvene Sunday, March 6, 2016, with consideration of the budget as the only item on the agenda.

David closed the meeting with a benediction.at 3:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian Payne, Acting Clerk

## Attachment 1.

**Current ARTICLE XI – CHURCH COUNCIL to be deleted and replaced with:  
Church Council and Leadership**

Responsibility and authority for ongoing church leadership shall be vested in the Officers, Boards, and Committees of the Church as provided for in the By-Laws. The Congregational officers and the chairpersons of the Boards and Committees and three Members-at-Large, shall constitute a Church Council, whose function is to consider the entire task of the Church and work cooperatively with the Pastor(s) to enable, coordinate, and implement the Church's mission and vision. At large members shall be elected by the congregation for two year terms. After serving three full terms, the Members-at Large shall be ineligible for re-election for one year.

The Council will have two Boards to accomplish this, a Governance Board to provide an administrative and policy framework for the work of the Church and a Ministry Board to coordinate and implement the Church's programs and ministries.

The Governance Board is responsible for developing and monitoring administrative and operational policies. The Governance Board shall consist of the Moderator, the Past Moderator, the Moderator Elect, the Church Clerk, the Treasurer, the Chair of the Board of Trustees, and three Members-at-Large. The Moderator is the chair of the Governance Board and the Senior Pastor serves as an *ex-officio* member.

The Ministry Board shall be responsible for coordination and oversight of the ministries, programs, and activities of the church in order to further the Church's stated mission and vision. The Ministry Board shall consist of the Senior Pastor, the presiding officers of the Boards of Deacons, Christian Education, and Outreach and Social Justice, and also of the Stewardship, Music, and Communications Committees. The Senior Pastor shall chair the Ministry Board and the Moderator shall serve as an *ex-officio* member.

The Council shall meet as a whole at least three times annually - to review the proposed budget to be presented to the Congregation for approval at the Annual Meeting, to discuss an overall plan for the upcoming program year, and to evaluate church programs and operations late in the program year. The Governance Board or the Ministry Board may also call a meeting of the entire Council.

The Council, or the Governance and Ministry Boards individually, may operate in a manner to best accomplish other duties specified for the Council in these By-Laws.

The Council shall fill any vacancies on the Nominations and Appointments Committee and shall submit a slate of nominees for such Committee at the Annual Meeting.

**In Article XII – Committees, add:**

**SECTION 8,** The *Communications Committee* shall consist of three members elected by the Congregation for a term of three years, one being elected at each Annual Meeting, plus at-large members with particular communications skills and a representative of the Evangelism Committee of the Board of Deacons. After serving two full terms, elected members shall be ineligible for re-election for one year. The at-large members shall be approved by the Ministry Board. Working collaboratively with staff and others, the

Committee shall seek to provide Little River United Church of Christ audiences, including members, friends, staff, and the wider community, with consistent and comprehensive information about all aspects of church life. Understanding that the diverse audiences require diverse communication, the Committee shall oversee the use of many communication channels while striving to maintain a consistent message and brand identity for the church.

**Current SECTIONS 8 and 9:** renumber these sections to become sections 9 and 10 respectively.

Amendments adopted February 7, 2016