

Little River United Church of Christ

Congregational Gathering Notes

July 17, 2016

Rev. David Lindsey opened the meeting with a prayer. He said this will be an informal gathering to update members and answer questions.

Treasurer's Update: Mary Summers, treasurer, reported that at mid-year she is cautiously optimistic. Currently our 2016 spending is within 2% of budget. Expenses are running below budget. Pledge income is lagging, but within 6% of expected. An audit of the building use accounts found about \$10,000 in unpaid rental income from 2014. That account is being brought up to date and the income will be reflected in the July treasurer's report. The Endowment fund has received \$29,152 in contributions with more expected. It has met both the key threshold for contributed principal (\$250,000) and the campaign requirements for a \$4000 match.

The use of unpaid leave saved money in the staff area. Pastoral 'ancillary' expenses appear underfunded. The budget didn't anticipate the use of guest ministers. Funding of the Associate Pastor Search Committee will be addressed in the 2017 budget. Utilities expenses have trended from the over-budgeted to now within budget, Building maintenance is below budget, but this is a false positive appearance as more maintenance is needed than currently funded. A new HVAC system has been installed at a cost of \$54,000 bringing our Major Repair Reserve Fund \$10,000. Operating funds are transferred to the Major Repair Reserve account monthly at a rate equaling 1% of total operating budget, as agreed at our Annual Meeting.

A total of \$54,000 in benevolences has been disbursed from the operating budget and from the off budget benevolence funds. We need to review, and take advantage of our designated funds.

Trustees Update: Robin Petrusak, chair, provided an update on the work of the Trustees. They are currently starting the budget process for 2017 and soliciting input from members and committees.

Earlier this year, Robin met with the church's insurance agent to review our insurance situation. She reported that we are currently insured for 5.3 million for both the building and its contents which is equivalent to \$150/square foot. To update our policy we need an inventory of the contents of the entire building. Other churches have done this by having volunteers take responsibility for one room, inventory its contents, and then go on the internet to assign a value to each item. The Trustees have a goal of getting the inventory done by 2017 in order to insure the building separately from its contents. They need help to get the job done.

The trustees have had to deal with a number of maintenance issues and are prioritizing them based on the following criteria: 1. Safety, 2. Security, 3. Comfort, and 4. Aesthetics. Currently we have a number of issues with the flat roof. We don't have the money to repair/replace the roof which will probably require a loan.

A new member has volunteered to do a landscape environmental management study of our property. Robin promises updates on this project in the future.

Finance Committee: Dave Curtis, chair, noted that the church is largely supported by volunteers. On occasion in the past, volunteers have been paid. The Finance Committee has drafted a policy for a process to determine when it may be appropriate to pay a member for services. The Committee is soliciting input on the policy before presenting it to the Governance Board for adoption.

Associate Pastor Search process: David reported that the Church Council authorized the creation of an associate pastor search committee at their June meeting. He feels we are definitely a multi-clergy church. Whether that means we will search for a full or part time associate or associates will be decided by the congregation when we meet with our consultant, Claire Bamberg, in October. A search committee, of which David will be an ex-officio member, will be appointed in the future. The committee will start by updating our church profile. After the profile is updated, the search process involves requesting applications from a UCC bank of certified applicants. The Central Atlantic Conference recently passed a resolution requiring search committees to take seriously all applications from under-represented categories of applicants. The search committee will interview applicants and ask the top applicant to preach on a Sunday morning at a nearby neutral church. Assuming that goes well, the applicant will be invited to preach on a Sunday morning at LRUCC which will be followed by a Congregational Meeting at which members will vote on the applicant.

In answer to questions, David said the search process usually takes 10 to 18 months, and that the Church Council can decide whether or not to employ in interim pastor while the search is underway. He noted that whether we look for a full time or part time associate depends on the outcome of the Stewardship Campaign.

Carolyn Yocom, chair of the committee that is working with Claire Bamberg to study possible pastoral models, said Claire, after reviewing all the individual responses from the congregation, will be putting together a report with five different suggested pastoral models. All members of the congregation will receive a copy of her report at least 10 days before the Congregational Meeting to be held on either October 16 or 23. Claire will facilitate the October Congregational Meeting at which time members will be asked to determine by vote which pastoral model will be adopted. Carolyn noted that her committee will be meeting with Claire this coming Thursday and that members are always invited to attend church committee meetings.

Violence in the U.S.: In response to the recent violence against LGBTQ people in Orlando and the deaths of African-American men by police and of police by snipers in Dallas and Baton Rouge, David asked that members take a few minutes to discuss in small groups the following questions: 1. How you feeling? 2. How is LRUCC positioned to minister in this moment? 3. What obstacles do we face?

Responses included: We need to better know those with whom we disagree, and those with different life experiences. We are living in a polarized society and need to know how to engage those with whom we disagree. We need to provide an opportunity for conversation with those outside our

church, perhaps with members of other churches, synagogues, and mosques. A suggestion was made that there should be a gathering of clergy up and down Little River Turnpike to enhance sharing among congregations.

Frustration was expressed at the length of time it takes this church to react to issues of concern. It was suggested that we need structures in place to react to timely issues. A suggestion was made that we need to encourage all to vote. It was noted that a conversation on race has been going on within our congregation for the past two years, and that the national church is coming out with a new curriculum on white privilege which offers an opportunity for continued conversation.

We have received a grant to further our work with "The New Jim Crow." Members are welcome to participate in a planning meeting after the service on July 31.

In closing David remarked that LRUCC has a tradition of welcoming discriminated groups and that he hopes will be continue this tradition. He closed the meeting with a prayer.

Respectfully submitted,
Ann Lingo
Clerk